

INVESTING IN WOMEN OF COLOR

EAST BAY COMMUNITY LAW CENTER'S IMPACT IN 2021



**EAST BAY
COMMUNITY
LAW CENTER**

MISSION

To promote justice and build a community that is more secure, productive, healthy, and hopeful by providing:

- Legal services and policy advocacy that are responsive to the needs of low-income communities, and
- Law training that prepares future attorneys to be skilled and principled advocates who are committed to addressing the causes and conditions of racial and economic injustice and poverty.

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CONTACT

www.ebclc.org
(510) 548-4040
info@ebclc.org
1950 University Ave.
Suite 200
Berkeley CA 94704

2921 Adeline St.
Berkeley CA 94703

LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



“IT IS EBCLC’S PRIVILEGE AND RESPONSIBILITY TO CENTER THE DIGNITY AND POWER OF WOMEN OF COLOR.”

—EBCLC’s public statement on the unveiling of its “Know Justice Know Peace” community mural

Since March 2020, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, East Bay Community Law Center has been on a journey.

At that time, we reviewed more than two decades of client data to learn from crises of the past, including the 2008 mortgage foreclosure crisis and the 2016 presidential election. We found that during these times, Black and Latinx women consistently sought out our help with evictions, criminal justice, debt collection, immigration, public benefits and other services. We also learned that women of color were the primary entry point for children, spouses, friends and family members to access EBCLC’s services. As the pandemic unfolded throughout 2020, we continued to track internal data and overlaid it with national statistics. Our findings showed women of color disproportionately bearing the brunt of unemployment, COVID-19 infections, and housing insecurity. In response, we designed a strategy to ensure our 30 years of community credibility could enable our clients to survive and even thrive in the face of the pandemic. Our leadership changed to mirror our programmatic shifts, as we recruited Board of Directors and Executive staff who were reflective of the clients we serve.

EBCLC launched 2021 with the aim to center women of color in our legal services, policy advocacy and clinical education. In the past year, we have made significant strides, from issuing a platform for bold public policies and legal reparations, to bolstering our evaluation system to further improve our services. We invite you to learn more about what EBCLC has achieved and our lessons learned.

As I look ahead, I recall the words of one of my heroes, Fannie Lou Hamer. She said, “None of us are free until everybody’s free.” With the COVID-19 pandemic entering its third year, the work ahead requires a commitment. It is our responsibility to ensure that the same communities that have been have been historically excluded from public investment and resources, are not left behind in the eagerness to “go back to normal.” EBCLC has adopted this value as our own. We are committed to advancing work to empower our clients and train the next generation of racial justice advocates to achieve our collective liberation.

Onward!

ZOË MELISSA POLK
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

EAST BAY COMMUNITY LAW CENTER’S WOMEN OF COLOR-CENTERED PLATFORM

WE BELIEVE IN:

RELIEF AND FREEDOM FOR OUR UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS, STUDENTS, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS who kept our economy afloat during COVID-19. This must include expansion of DACA.

HEALTHCARE FOR ALL. Healthcare facilities must address racial disparities in health outcomes. They must ensure that their providers do not discriminate against their staff or patients.

UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME. Meaningful cash disbursements that allow communities of color to compete with generational and historically white wealth.

AN ENFORCEABLE RIGHT TO HOUSING. All back rent must be waived and the eviction moratorium extended until the structural changes are made by the state and local government to address redlining.

CANCELLATION OF STUDENT DEBT. Student loan forgiveness will ensure that historic unemployment and a slow economy will not impoverish primarily Black borrowers.

IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF ALL INCARCERATED YOUTH. Investments must be made in families not the school-to-prison pipeline.

RELEASE AND REPARATIONS FOR ALL ENSNARED IN THE FAILED WAR ON DRUGS. Universal recognition that drug laws and enforcement must be accompanied by meaningful action to address the harm.

A LIVING WAGE. Compensation for essential workers and their families must be commensurate to their value.

OUR IMPACT

In the last year, EBCLC made the following impact:

**OVER 4,000
PEOPLE
SERVED**

**98% OF
CLIENTS**
represented were not
evicted due to our services

**120 LAW
STUDENTS**
were trained alongside our
attorneys to provide holistic
services to our clients

78 CLIENTS
increased their personal
safety by working with
our Name and Gender
Change Workshop

**A TOTAL OF
\$318,000**
in consumer and student
loan debt was discharged

**95% OF
CLIENTS**
who received full scope repre-
sentation in Clean Slate Clinic
cleared their criminal record

**100% OF EBCLC'S IN-HOME
SUPPORT SERVICES CASES**
resulted in monetary compensation for women of color who are unable
to work outside the home due to their child's exceptional needs





OUR PROGRAMS

CLEAN SLATE CLINIC

Provides legal services at the intersection of criminal and employment law. It represents clients on post-conviction record remedies in criminal court and engages in local and statewide criminal justice reform, particularly related to court debt and the criminalization of homelessness.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC JUSTICE CLINIC

Advances economic development through under-resourced, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color) entrepreneurs and business owners using a community-based, anti-displacement lens to create a more equitable local economy.

CONSUMER JUSTICE CLINIC

Represents under-resourced plaintiffs to release them from untenable debt from student loans, credit cards, pay day lenders, and settlement stakeholders who target immigrants and communities of color.

EDUCATION DEFENSE AND JUSTICE FOR YOUTH (EDJY) CLINIC

Dismantles the school-to-prison pipeline by working with school districts to get police off of school campuses; closing youth jails; and building a national coalition to reform/eventually abolish youth electronic monitoring.

HEALTH AND WELFARE CLINIC

Integrates lawyers directly into healthcare teams at high-need medical centers using Medical-Legal Partnerships to expand access to unemployment benefits and ensure that immigrant and mixed-status families maintain access to healthcare and nutrition.

HOUSING CLINIC

Protects and promotes safe, healthy, and affordable housing for low-income tenants through eviction defense and local policy advocacy.

IMMIGRATION CLINIC

Prioritizes complex legal remedies using a “Kindergarten-to-College” school-based model for parents and young people to access legal services in a safe space. EBCLC is also the only nonprofit in Alameda County providing free immigration remedies for people with past criminal convictions.

SOCIAL WORK

Provides ongoing case management, crisis intervention, system navigation, and supportive advocacy to clients throughout the agency.

FEATURED CLIENT STORIES

“Our commitment to a world in which race does not matter requires daily work.”
— EBCLC’s Statement on the 2021 U.S. Presidential Inauguration

PROVIDING CLIENT-CENTERED LEGAL SERVICES

Candy Smallwood, Staff Attorney/
Clinical Supervisor at EBCLC started her
role with the Clean Slate Clinic during
a monumental time. In February 2020,
at the beginning of COVID-19, EBCLC
achieved a critical victory in *Sanchez v
Caltrans*, a lawsuit to protect the rights
of unsheltered people nationwide and
restituting the Berkeley, Oakland, and
Emeryville homeless community for
their destroyed belongings in a \$5.5M
settlement.

Smallwood was very involved during the restitution
process, working with almost 200 volunteers to process
settlements and assist clients in filing their 8-page claim
forms. A total of 1,174 people were compensated
\$1,100 each on average for loss of belongings. For
Smallwood, one of the most significant parts of this
major accomplishment is how EBCLC and volunteers
were able to show up for the community.

One of Smallwood’s clients, a 51-year-old African
American woman, became homeless when
management raised her rent to a point where she could
no longer afford to pay it. She had to move, but she
could not afford rent anywhere else. She told Candy
that the hard part for her was that when she became
homeless, she felt like there was no one there to help.
She lost her home because she could not afford the
raised rent, and then on top of that Caltrans took all of
her belongings.

EBCLC staff and volunteers helped distribute the
settlement funds. Smallwood noted the majority of the
people who showed up to retrieve their claims were

people of color. Many of these clients had become
homeless for reasons tied to structural and systemic
racism.

Smallwood’s work with Decriminalization of Poverty
and Homelessness, a subset of the Clean Slate, is
deeply influenced by her history:

*“I am the second oldest of 8 kids and growing up we
lived in public housing. When my parents tried to look
for places to live outside of public housing, as renters,
no one wanted to rent to a Black family with eight
kids. The experience of growing up in a very low-
income community, like literally until my mid-20s has
shaped me.”*

Smallwood’s work on Homelessness and
Decriminalization of Poverty with EBCLC’s Clean Slate
Clinic exemplifies the holistic community care at the
core of EBCLC’s Women of Color-Centered Platform.

PARTNERING WITH OAKLAND FOOD ENTREPRENEURS TO THRIVE

**EBCLC’s Community Economic Justice
Clinic (CEJ) works to advance people-
oriented economic development and
empower low-income communities of
color to build long-term solutions to
poverty in the East Bay.**

CEJ’s nonprofit client Oakland Bloom exemplifies this
mission by creating pathways to business ownership
for poor and working-class refugee and immigrant
food entrepreneurs in Oakland. It also provides
additional support to protect these communities against
displacement.

In 2017, Oakland Bloom sought legal advice from
CEJ to start a cooperative restaurant group with the
goal of providing more robust business support to its
entrepreneurs. CEJ represented Oakland Bloom for



several years, offering legal assistance and technical
support to enable the client to create a democratic
cooperative business incubator.

In 2020, COVID-19 fundamentally impacted the small
business community, resulting in permanent closures
of many local businesses. The pandemic hit the food
industry particularly hard, impacting small businesses
run by immigrants and primary caregivers. Oakland
Bloom adapted to meet the shifting realities of the
pandemic with CEJ’s support.

In 2020, Oakland Bloom accepted an offer to take
over a restaurant space as part owner to shape it into
a cooperatively governed restaurant and community
space to further its charitable goals. The worker-led
restaurant, Understory, successfully launched in 2021.
Composed of workers who are majority BIPOC,
LGBTQ, and from immigrant backgrounds, the staff
work together to shape operations, menu and labor
conditions. Through this new initiative and collectively
led kitchen, Oakland Bloom provides hands-on
restaurant training to immigrant, refugee and other
BIPOC and working class food entrepreneurs.
Additionally, the restaurant creates pathways to
ownership and dignity for workers who have faced





discrimination and other barriers in the industry. True to its name, ‘Understory’ represents the richly diverse ecosystems that thrive below a forest canopy and is a place that celebrates collective resilience.

CENTERING THE NEEDS OF YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES IN SCHOOLS

EBCLC met C*, a 14-year-old Black girl, in juvenile court after her first contact with the juvenile legal system. C was recently arrested and charged for an alleged incident at her school.

She was scared but also angry — her school, where she was meant to feel safest, had turned its back on her, failing to support her in ways that she needed. At the same time, C and her mother were homeless, struggling to have even their most basic needs met. These needs only became more urgent once the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Our holistic legal and social work team worked in tandem to keep C out of the juvenile legal system and help her family move towards stability. While C’s attorney in our Education Defense and Justice for Youth Clinic litigated to ultimately get C’s case dismissed in the interest of justice, her social worker supported her family in obtaining a long-term motel stay at the peak of the pandemic and collaborated with our Housing Clinic on permanent housing leads, helping them move into transitional housing. Her social worker also supported C’s mother in securing employment and benefits and advocated for C’s educational needs in distance learning, connected her with counseling, and ensured she and her mother had access to necessities by dropping off groceries, toiletries, and assisting with transportation.

Today, C and her mother live in their own apartment – her mother recently started a full-time job and C consistently attends school. Perhaps most importantly, C feels hopeful about her bright future ahead.

**Name changed for confidentiality.*

ENABLING MOTHERS AND BABIES TO OBTAIN HOLISTIC CARE

EBCLC’s Health & Welfare Clinic provides critical legal services to Alameda County residents who are at risk of poor health outcomes due to poverty, unsafe living conditions, discrimination, homelessness, inadequate health care coverage, and other destabilizing social conditions.

Since 2015, EBCLC has partnered with Alameda County and Highland Hospital on project DULCE (Developmental Understanding and Legal Collaboration for Everyone), a pediatric primary care intervention for children in the critical first six months of life. Ingrid Murillo, Paralegal at the Health & Welfare Clinic, works closely with DULCE’s family specialist and doctor on managing referrals to EBCLC. Murillo works with the families and EBCLC’s Immigration Clinic to gather information and build the most compelling cases to submit to Immigration Services.

In May 2019, Murillo informed EBCLC’s Immigration Clinic of a specific DULCE client. She was a domestic violence survivor who fled her country with four kids while pregnant, and gave birth after arriving in the U.S. EBCLC’s immigration lawyers decided to represent the family. In March 2021, San Francisco Immigration Court decided the case in the family’s favor — granting a defensive asylum application for the mother and her four children, effectively terminating the deportation proceedings. Murillo views this case as a huge win, citing that this family was assisted by EBCLC in multiple areas



including social work, housing, and immigration:

“We look at the whole case. The holistic intake we do gives families a connection to so many resources, utilizing EBCLC’s internal referrals. We build rapport with the family, which helps them feel settled and connected. The way that we work with the DULCE team gives us follow-through and impact for the families that is rarely seen.”

**SUPPORTING
OUR IMMIGRANT
CLIENTS TO REALIZE
HEALTHY AND
THRIVING LIVES**

EBCLC worked with N*, an asylum seeker from Mexico, and her four children in the past year.

During our Immigration Clinic’s time working with N on her asylum case, significant challenges arose.

She faced ongoing threats from her ex-partner and was diagnosed with COVID-19 while she was pregnant; she had also moved almost two hours away from Berkeley, where EBCLC is based, which presented an obstacle to transportation to in-person meetings. Additionally, N lacked computer access, making virtual meetings with her attorney difficult – this became more taxing with a recent newborn. Our attorneys and social workers found workarounds to guarantee that EBCLC was still able to regularly connect with N remotely on her case proceedings.

We are proud to share that in 2021, N was granted asylum. Her children, who were present for the final video hearing from the judge, were granted derivative asylum status as well. Beyond having the security of being authorized to stay in the country, she is now also eligible to work and obtain public benefits for her and her children like CalWORKs, CalFresh and Medi-Cal.

“EBCLC helped me so much and I am thankful every day that I found an organization like EBCLC, whose work went above and beyond to help me win my asylum case,” she said. With EBCLC’s continued advocacy, N and her children have begun a more secure life together.



**KEY VICTORIES
AND POLICY
WINS**

“EBCLC aims to uplift whole communities by centering women of color. Not only have we borne the brunt of the COVID–19 crisis, but we have also been the lifeline of families, neighborhoods, and the entire country during this pandemic.”

— EBCLC’s statement on the Release of its Findings on Vaccinations Among Women of Color Clients



KEY VICTORIES FOR WOMEN OF COLOR

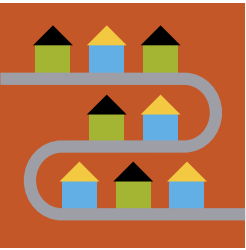
As a women of color-led and centered organization, EBCLC has and will continue to invest in strategies and solutions for women of color. This is the first year that we have focused on this platform as a result of an in-depth analysis of existing client data as well as an organization-wide recommitment to racial justice work.

Based on EBCLC’s data and existing national research published during the COVID-19 pandemic, we understand that women make up the majority of essential workers in the US and are on the frontlines of all impacted groups. It is through investing in women of color first that EBCLC is able to transform and uplift entire families and communities.

One way in which we practice this ideology every day is by closely examining our policy advocacy efforts to ensure that the bills and measures that we endorse benefit women of color. Staff engage the authors of bills and coalition partners to understand their effects on this group, and continue to advocate for systems-level changes that improves their lives.

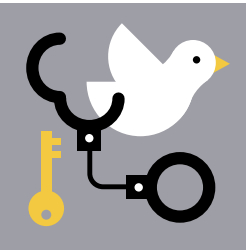
POLICY WINS

Examples of our policy work in the past year include advancing:



Eviction Moratorium

As a leader in housing justice, EBCLC played a key role in creating and advocating for the eviction moratorium in Alameda County. Despite national and state moratoriums ending, Alameda tenants will continue to be protected from all eviction notices served or unlawful detainer complaints filed from March 24, 2020 through at least 60 days after the County public health emergency is lifted.



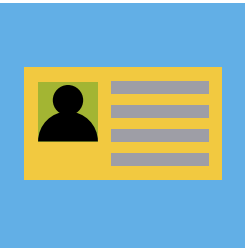
Alternatives to Youth Incarceration

EBCLC was an active member of the Free Our Kids Coalition, which halted Alameda County’s plans to spend \$75 million to rebuild its 100-bed juvenile probation camp, Camp Sweeney. The Coalition also advocated for the release of incarcerated youth during the pandemic and centered the needs of impacted youth and residents in the implementation of Senate Bill 823, which closes the state’s youth prisons.



Anti-Displacement Strategies

EBCLC’s anti-displacement policies prioritize low income renters and communities of color and create pathways to homeownership. Our Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) policies give tenants options to have secure housing when the property they rent goes up for sale, while also preserving affordable housing.



Driver’s License Suspensions

EBCLC represented plaintiffs in the lawsuit, Hernandez v. CA Department of Motor Vehicles, challenging the DMV’s suspension of licenses. As a result, the DMV lifted 554,997 improperly imposed suspensions, allowing working-class people affected by the lawsuit to drive legally, work, and resume supporting their families.



Debt Protection for Working Families

EBCLC worked to expand protections for working class people against predatory debt settlement companies through bill AB 1405, which passed in October 2021. It will strengthen consumer rights, increase transparency, and improve regulation to protect low-income residents in California from unfair practices in the debt settlement industry.



Gender Marker Changes on Federal IDs

EBCLC advocated for changes to federal policies to make it easier for transgender and gender non-conforming (TGNC) people to change their gender marker on their passports. In June 2021, the State Department announced that it would no longer require applicants to submit medical certification to change the gender marker, allowing TGNC people to live more authentically and increasing access to medical services and employment.

CLINICAL EDUCATION AND ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

CLINICAL EDUCATION

EBCLC maintains a dynamic collaboration between clinical supervising attorneys and law students. Over the past year, 120 students received training as community lawyers.

“Getting the opportunity to represent clients in court this year has been a privilege and an essential learning experience. I came to law school to develop the skills necessary to be an effective advocate for those impacted by the criminal legal system...While representing a young person facing felony charges, I argued for his release from juvenile hall in a detention hearing, negotiated reduced charges with the DA, facilitated a plea colloquy, argued for the least restrictive probation sentence, and continue to represent him in regular status updates. Through this work, I learned the social dynamics, language and culture of juvenile delinquency court. Because of this experience I feel more prepared to advocate for my clients in court as a public defender after graduation.”

- Madison Ordway, Education Defense and Justice for Youth Services

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

In its 2021 Alumni Engagement Survey, we heard from over 150 alumni and learned that a majority of our alumni launch their careers in public service.



“My family is Black Jamaican American, and I’m first generation American, so growing up we faced a lot of issues at the intersection of criminal law and immigration. Because of this, I was always very acutely aware of the school to prison pipeline and I wanted to join a clinic where I could do a lot of work towards dismantling that system. I joined Education Defense and Justice for Youth because there are so many issues facing the world, specifically minorities facing so many problems, and I wanted to do work that could make a difference.”

- Alycia Tulloch, Associate Frankfurt Kurnit Klein & Selz (Education Defense and Justice for Youth ‘19)



“As a lawyer for the reproductive justice movement, EBCLC helped me develop an intersectional law practice and career. Whether launching Esq. Apprentice — an Oakland based non-profit helping low-income women of color become lawyers via legal apprenticeship — or returning to my alma mater to run the Center on Reproductive Rights & Justice, EBCLC helped me hone my instincts as a community lawyer and inspired me to use my legal education creatively and for the benefit of low-income communities.”

- Rachel Johnson-Farias, Esq., Founding Executive Director, Esq. Apprentice (Health and Welfare, '12)



“I went to Law School to become an advocate for families like mine dealing with housing instability. Working in the housing clinic at EBCLC I learned from some of the best housing lawyers in the country fighting to keep people in their homes. At EBCLC, I got plenty of hands-on experience in the courtroom representing families fighting to stay housed. After graduation, I wanted to take what I learned at EBCLC back to Denver. In 2020, I co-founded an eviction defense non-profit to keep Colorado renters in their homes and I am now running for the State Legislature to pass better renter protections in the Colorado State House.”

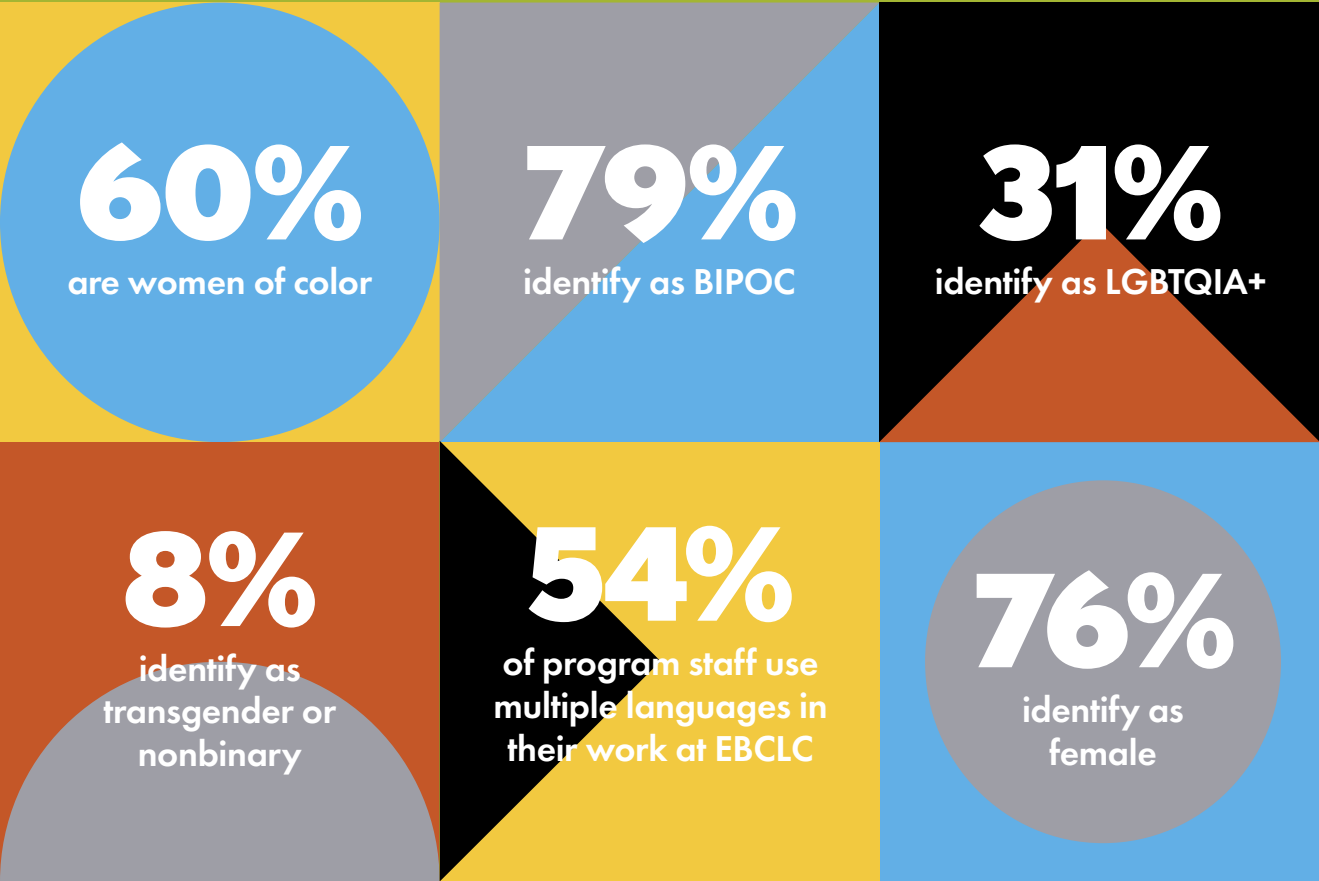
- Javier Mabrey, Candidate for Colorado HD1, (Housing ‘19)

ORGANIZATIONAL INVESTMENTS

“In a victory for the entire organization, the East Bay Community Law Center has reached a collective bargaining agreement amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and national discourse on valuing the dignity of workers.”

- EBCLC's public statement on the successful execution of our first Collective Bargaining Agreement

WHO IS EBCLC STAFF?



FEATURED STAFF QUOTES



“Every day I live, I honor the lives of my grandmother who was forced into internment camps because of the color of her skin, and my mother who was born there. She grew up ashamed of the color of her skin but made sure to raise me with a deep appreciation for who I am as a fourth-generation Japanese American. I gratefully carry their painful legacy on my shoulders with respect, dignity and perseverance and strive to make them proud of whom I have become because of their sacrifices.”

— Shauna Fujimoto, Contracts Officer



“I have assisted so many Black women clients, for many years now here at EBCLC. I have helped change lives and save their housing. I am honored to be on the best housing team in the bay and still be happy doing this work.”

— Gracie Jones, Project Manager, Housing Clinic



“As an undocumented Mexican living in this country who’s had the opportunity to pursue higher education I feel like it is my duty to help individuals who do not have the same opportunities to pursue higher education and navigate a broken immigration system. My family, friends, and community are who inspire me because immigration is not a Latinx issue but a human rights issue.”

— Ramon Becerra Alcantar, Paralegal & DOJ Accredited Legal Representative, Immigration Law Clinic

FINANCIALS

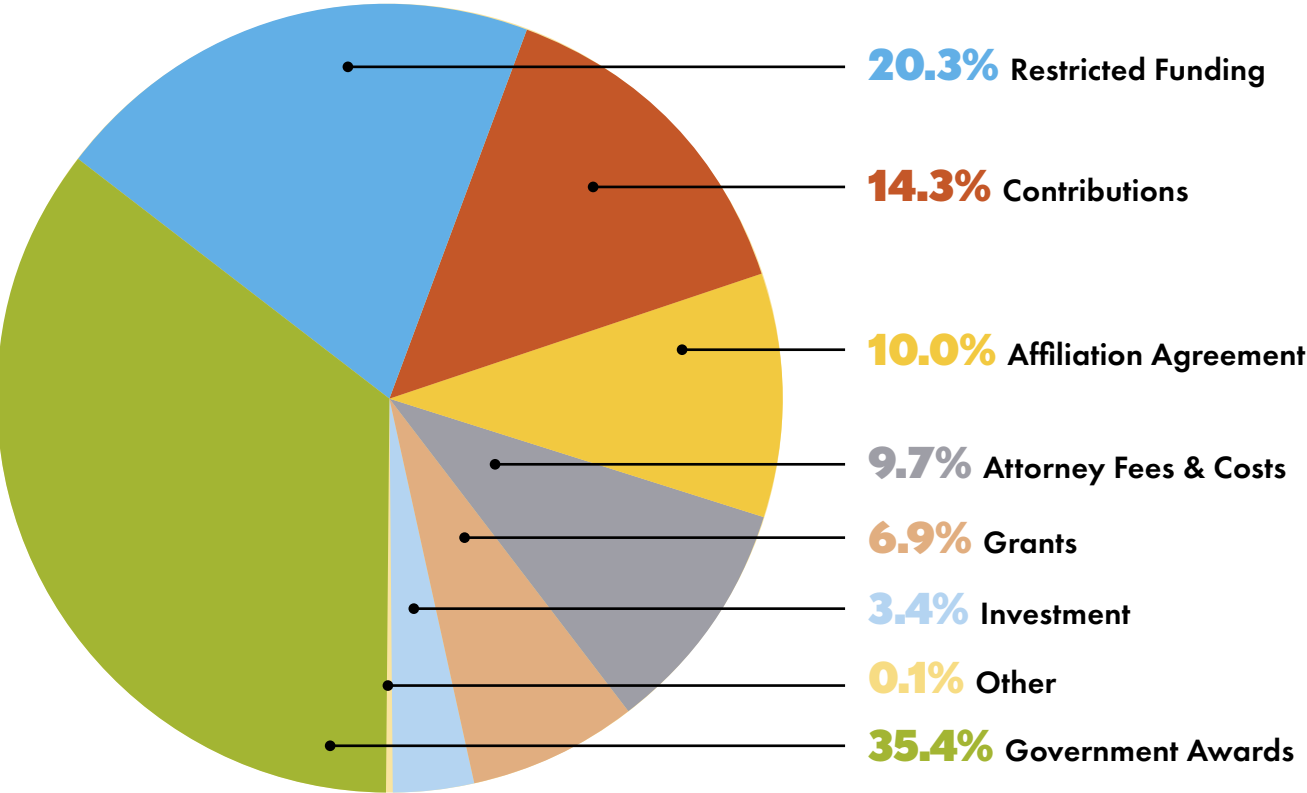
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	FY2021	FY2020
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	4,357,364	1,852,162
Cash held in trust	422,174	346,318
Investments	2,005,232	1,642,419
Grants, pledges & accounts receivable	1,883,741	1,331,269
Prepaid expenses	168,949	115,642
Total Current Assets	8,837,460	5,287,810
Property and equipment, net	1,536,694	1,586,186
Deposits	29,328	29,328
TOTAL ASSETS	10,403,482	6,903,324
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	128,398	88,737
Accrued vacation	477,406	439,757
Deferred revenue	343,608	516,817
Client trust accounts	421,580	345,725
Refundable Advance-PPP	-	127,557
Total Liabilities	1,370,992	1,518,593
Net Assets		
Without donor restrictions	5,841,377	4,104,825
With donor restrictions	3,191,113	1,279,906
Total Net Assets	9,032,490	5,384,731
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	10,403,482	6,903,324

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

	WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	TOTAL
SUPPORT AND REVENUE			
Support			
Government awards	3,788,666	-	3,788,666
Foundation and community grants	735,944	3,802,667	4,538,611
Contributions	1,529,444	275,018	1,804,462
Total Support	6,054,054	4,077,685	10,131,739
Revenue			
Affiliation Agreement	1,067,657	-	1,067,657
Attorney fees and costs	1,037,235	-	1,037,235
Investment activity, net	363,180	-	363,180
Other	9,381	-	9,381
Total Revenue	2,477,453	-	2,477,453
Support provided by expiring time and purpose restrictions	2,167,020	(2,167,020)	-
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	10,698,527	1,910,665	12,609,192
EXPENSES			
Program	6,789,931	-	6,789,931
Management and General	1,517,530	-	1,517,530
Fundraising	653,972	-	653,972
TOTAL EXPENSES	8,961,433	-	8,961,433
Change in Net Assets	1,737,094	1,910,665	3,647,759
Net Assets, beginning of year	4,104,825	1,279,906	5,384,731
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	5,841,919	3,190,571	9,032,490

BREAKDOWN OF GIVING



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Our work is made possible because of your investment. We extend deep appreciation to the following individuals, foundations, law firms, and businesses who contributed to EBCLC between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.

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Altshuler Berzon LLP
Crosner Legal
Leonard Carder, LLP



CONTACT

www.ebclc.org

(510) 548-4040

info@ebclc.org

1950 University Ave.
Suite 200
Berkeley CA 94704

2921 Adeline St.
Berkeley CA 94703



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