



CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE FOR EQUALITY AND JUSTICE



2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



I am excited to share CCEJ's 2023-2027 strategic plan. This strategic plan serves as our roadmap over the next four years as we forge our path forward. As our nation struggles to address the challenges resulting from a global pandemic, as well as a renewed focus on addressing systemic oppression, we recognize that CCEJ's role in increasing equity, inclusion and justice for all people has never been more important.

Building on our long and successful history of promoting equity and justice in Southern California, our new plan captures the results of a seven-month planning process where we thought deeply about our identity, the impact of our work and the organizational capacity that is needed to meet the demands of our world. Through this effort, we have defined a bold new vision, mission, set of values and strategic direction for CCEJ that provides us with the clarity and focus needed to deepen our impact.

As this strategic plan demonstrates, we are committed to building upon our current programming and continuing to work with youth and adults to educate and empower them to challenge systems of oppression. At the same time we are also expanding our role and impact in driving systems change in partnership with key institutions, including schools, nonprofit organizations and the juvenile criminal legal system. Our plan also includes an investment in our internal capacity to ensure we can achieve our goals and meet our mission.

We are excited for what lies ahead and look forward to collaborating with all of you, our partners, as we build a *world where people live free of oppression and thrive.*

In community,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Reena Hajat Carroll". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Reena Hajat Carroll,MSW

WHO IS CCEJ

1963

CCEJ was originally founded as the Long Beach chapter of the National Conference for Christians and Jews (NCCJ) in 1963. NCCJ was a national organization founded in 1927 by a group of leaders and activists who wanted to address and prevent anti-semitism and anti-Catholic sentiment in the United States.

CCEJ (then known as NCCJ Long Beach) launched our successful Building Bridges Camp, a 3-day retreat where high school students explore identity, stereotypes, prejudice, and build skills to promote inclusion in their schools and communities.

1993

1998

Over the decades, NCCJ expanded efforts to combat bigotry and promote mutual respect among different ethnic, racial and religious groups. NCCJ changed its name to the National Conference for Community and Justice in 1998 to reflect this evolution to prevent bias and prejudice and promote inclusion of people of all backgrounds.

Due to the closure of the national office, CCEJ became an independent nonprofit organization and updated its name to "California Conference for Equality and Justice." This evolution combined the Long Beach, Los Angeles, Orange County, and San Diego chapters of the NCCJ.

2005

2013

CCEJ launched a youth diversion program using Restorative Justice practices to address the disproportionate impacts of the juvenile criminal legal system on Black, brown and marginalized youth in Los Angeles County.

During the COVID pandemic, CCEJ created innovative online dialogue and education programs when pandemic restrictions limited in-person programming.

2020

2022

CCEJ returned to in-person programming, continuing to build relationships, connections and community.



OUR IMPACT

The need for increased equity, inclusion and justice for all people has always existed and the solutions have been complex. At CCEJ, we lead people of all backgrounds in deep examinations of power and privilege at the personal and societal levels, inspiring them to build community across differences and work together to advance equity, inclusion and justice. We create “brave” spaces for participants to discuss vulnerable topics such as the harmful impacts of racism and discrimination, and to create plans for action and change. Our programs incorporate Restorative Justice practices to support youth and adults to increase their resiliency and ability to address identity- based conflict.

CCEJ’s participants and partners are primarily based in Los Angeles County, San Bernardino County, Riverside County, and Orange County.

CCEJ believes that everyone has a role to play in transforming our schools, workplaces and communities to be more just and equitable. We provide experiential, interactive training and coaching on inclusion, equity and Restorative Justice for more than 3,000 adults annually.

3,000
adults are provided experiential, interactive training and coaching annually

10,000 adults trained to create more equitable schools and workplaces since 2018



Being part of a CCEJ training cohort helped me see how to participate in a social justice movement in a way in which you can be gentle, center your values, and express care for self and others.”

- Adult training participant

Sharing helps others feel safe. Connecting with others opens doors for us to be better leaders. I will use what I learn to be an upstander and advocate for others.”

- Youth participant

Each year, we support more than **1,500** youth and young adults to develop self-awareness and leadership skills through programs such as:



BUILDING BRIDGES CAMP:

a 3-day retreat for high school students to explore identity, stereotypes, prejudice, and build skills to promote inclusion in their schools and communities.

CONSCIOUS CLASSROOMS:

an in-school program for K-12 students to foster awareness and take action for making their classes more inclusive and equitable.

RESTORATIVE YOUTH DIVERSION:

an alternative to the juvenile criminal legal system for youth to build self-awareness, understand the impact of their actions, and practice accountability to people who they have harmed.

23,000

youth trained through Building Bridges for Youth camp since the camps' start in Long Beach in 1993

Developed one of Los Angeles County's first juvenile diversion programs rooted in Restorative Justice practices; since 2013, diverted over

800

 youth from the criminal legal system

Fostered multi-year partnerships with Green Dot Public Schools, Coachella Unified School District and Long Beach Unified School District, amongst others, to implement Restorative Justice practices and decrease expulsions and suspensions

CCEJ's diversion program helped me see that I'm not the only one going through things, and I learned how to deal with my emotions. We learned that we won't have to be defined by what some would consider our biggest mistakes."

- Restorative Youth Diversion participant





STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In September of 2022, CCEJ launched a seven-month strategic planning process to guide our direction and priorities for the next four years. As part of this process, we partnered with Margolis Consulting to ensure the strategic planning process was transparent, inclusive and uplifted the voices of CCEJ staff, board, program participants and partners. The planning process was anchored by a Strategic Planning Committee, which provided critical input in the development of the strategic framework presented in this plan.



OUR STRATEGIC FOCUS

At the start of our planning effort, CCEJ leadership and the Strategic Planning Committee identified three priorities to be addressed in the strategic plan.



Priority 1: Confirm CCEJ vision and mission

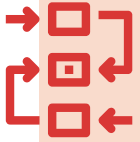
We sought to understand our unique value and the change we sought in the world.

Priority 2: Define impact and identify programmatic direction

We explored what we do well, what we should continue, expand, or let go.

Priority 3: Identify internal capacity needs to advance priorities and goals of the new plan

We identified where we needed to invest internally to ensure we can successfully achieve our strategic plan and meet our mission.



OUR PLANNING PROCESS

The strategic planning process included two distinct phases.

Phase 1: Stakeholder Engagement

In the fall of 2022 we implemented a stakeholder engagement process. This allowed us to systematically collect real-time quantitative and qualitative data from stakeholders, including staff, board, funders, collaborative members, program participants, and key partners. We elicited input and ideas on CCEJ's structure, impact, successes, challenges, and strategic opportunities. This stakeholder engagement process included:

- Formation of a Strategic Planning Committee that included CCEJ staff and board members to inform the stakeholder engagement process, co-design the planning retreats, and guide the creation of the strategic plan components.
- A web-based survey disseminated to our stakeholders which collected data from 68 stakeholders.
- Five virtual 1-on-1 interviews.
- Three virtual focus groups with a broad cross-section of stakeholders, including former CCEJ program participants, current board members and funders.

Phase 2: Strategy Design & Development

We undertook a collaborative process over a two-day in-person retreat in January 2023 to develop our new vision and mission and explore CCEJ's strategic priorities. We also used this time to reflect on the feedback from our stakeholders and connect as a board and staff community.





WHAT WE LEARNED: Key Themes from Stakeholder Engagement

Through the stakeholder engagement process, several key themes emerged related to CCEJ's unique value and programmatic impact.

CCEJ's Unique Value

» CCEJ Staff and Approach to the Work

Stakeholders and partners view CCEJ staff as leading experts and practitioners in restorative justice and racial equity. Additionally, across the stakeholder engagement, CCEJ staff were highly praised for making people feel heard by creating safe and healing spaces to engage in transformative conversations.

» Youth Work

CCEJ is highly recognized for its youth programming, particularly Building Bridges Camp and Conscious Classrooms, which create safe spaces for youth to develop leadership and advocacy skills.

» Adult Trainings

Across the stakeholder engagement, respondents expressed that CCEJ trainings are high quality, meaningful, relevant, and action-oriented.

» Restorative Justice Practices and Values

Stakeholders shared that CCEJ truly embodies restorative justice values and practices. CCEJ upholds these values internally as an organization and with its external partners. Further, CCEJ intentionally embeds restorative justice with its equity and racial justice work.

» Communities Served

CCEJ's programming spans diverse ages - from youth to adulthood. This provides CCEJ with a unique opportunity to begin restorative justice and racial equity work with younger generations that can influence their communities, while working with adults who can work to change the systems in which they operate.



CCEJ trainers [are] phenomenal. [They] create a safe space for people to have conversations. They [are] really confident in their ability to do the work, but they also left space for people to do the work.”

- Focus Group participant

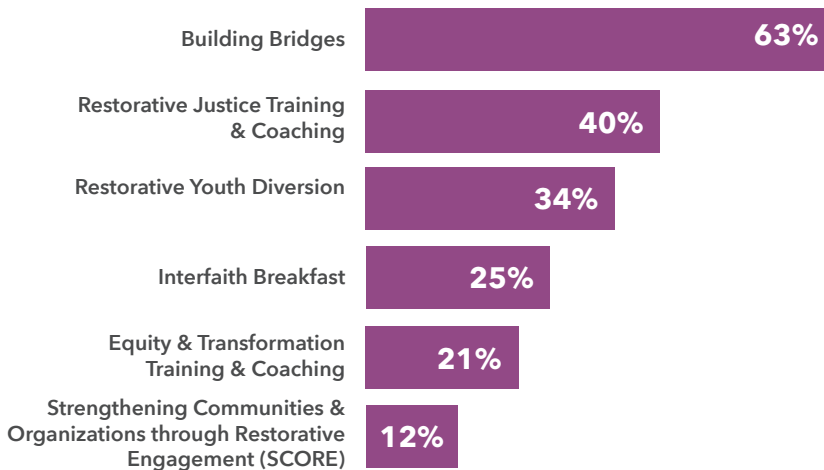
CCEJ and their staff are excellent at making people feel heard.”

- Survey respondent



Survey: CCEJ Programs with Greatest Impact

Question: Thinking about your experience with CCEJ over the past five years, which programs do you believe have had the greatest impact? (n=67)



What our partners are saying:

“This is an organization that starts with young people and has adult programs around courageous conversations. We like that it starts very young and goes until adulthood.”

“CCEJ staff have a level of honesty and straightforwardness that is needed in order for us to address [community] issues. [CCEJ] is honest and forthright about what it takes to do [equity] work in the community.”

CCEJ's Most Impactful Programs

» Building Bridges Youth Camp

Program alumni expressed that Building Bridges profoundly impacted their life trajectories. Through Building Bridges, program alumni strengthened their self-confidence and had opportunities to build their leadership and advocacy skills.

» School-Based Programs

Stakeholders shared that Conscious Classrooms allows youth to express themselves and have a voice in their school environments. Through Conscious Classrooms, youth strengthen their agency, leadership, and advocacy skills. Stakeholders also noted that the Illuminar trainings and CCEJ's work with school leaders have helped to transform schools into more equitable and inclusive spaces for youth.

» Adult Trainings

According to stakeholders, CCEJ's adult trainings support institutions and organizations in creating equitable work environments, which results in staff and leadership having greater awareness of white supremacy culture and equity issues. Further, stakeholders mentioned that CCEJ's adult trainings build a foundation for institutions to create concrete changes in their workspaces.

» Youth Diversion

Stakeholders expressed that CCEJ's diversion work interrupts the criminalization of youth of color and positively impacts both those who have committed crimes and those who were harmed. CCEJ is viewed as the expert and go-to resource for integrating restorative justice approaches into diversion work.



OUR ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

CCEJ considered our organizational impact and purpose, resulting in a new vision, mission and set of organizational values to anchor and guide our work moving forward.



MISSION STATEMENT

To educate and empower youth and adults to lead change for equity and justice in our communities.



VISION STATEMENT

A world where people live free of oppression and thrive.



VALUES

Relationships: We center connections and work to build trust, understanding, and honesty. We have a mutual responsibility and interest in each other's well-being.

Care: We invest time and energy in the wellness of individuals and the community. We lean on one another for strength and hope.

Curiosity: We ask questions and seek different perspectives. We recognize our own assumptions and biases.

Accountability: We take responsibility for the impact we have on others. We respond to conflict in ways that build trust.

Imagination: We believe that another world is possible. We create possibilities for more equity and justice in our own lives, workplaces, and communities.

Interdependence: We believe by connecting our individual strengths, we intentionally build a collective whole to deepen our impact.





OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

CCEJ's strategic framework focuses on three strategic focus areas. These focus areas emerged from the strategic planning process as priority areas of growth, opportunity and impact.

Youth Leadership

This strategic priority builds upon and strengthens our current program offerings for youth, including Building Bridges Camp. We recognize the positive impact our programs have on youth in building their understanding of racism and other forms of oppression, while providing skills and opportunities for them to actively work towards justice and challenge systems of oppression. The goals and strategies outlined in this plan create more intentional pathways for youth to remain in relationship and community with CCEJ as they transition to adulthood, while centering youth voices in our work. Our focus will be on supporting youth in their growth as leaders, connecting them to career opportunities and helping them to be change agents in their workplaces. We are also committed to expanding our support for young people who have contact with or been impacted by the criminal legal system, including youth we serve in our Youth Diversion program.

Institutional Transformation

CCEJ has a long history of training and empowering adults to grow individually and to challenge the systems in which they operate to promote equity and justice. With this strategic priority, we are building upon our successful adult training and coaching services to create deeper, systemic change within critical institutions -- schools, nonprofits, and the juvenile criminal legal system. Through the creation of a model to intentionally shift institutions and structures towards equity and justice, we will work in partnership with institutions to create systemic change. We will also be focusing internally to ensure all of our programs are in alignment with and contribute towards transforming institutions to be more equitable and just.

Telling Our Story

Over the years CCEJ has played a critical role in educating and empowering youth and adults to lead change for equity and justice in our communities. As we continue to deepen and expand our work, we are also committed to strengthening our internal capacity to measure and assess our programs and to increase the visibility of CCEJ and our impact more broadly. This strategic priority will help us tell our story more effectively, with a focus on branding, communications and program evaluation.

2023-2027 GOALS & STRATEGIES

The following goals and strategies, organized by our three strategic focus areas, will drive our efforts and investments over the next four years.

Youth Leadership



GOAL 1 :

By 2027, CCEJ will strengthen its youth leadership program ecosystem to provide youth, from childhood to early adulthood, with opportunities to actively work towards justice and challenge systems of oppression.

Strategy 1: By 2025, develop new and expanded programs for up to 50 youth, ages 18-25, to succeed and thrive in their careers as their full authentic selves.

Strategy 2: By 2026, provide leadership skill building and facilitation opportunities to up to 25 juvenile criminal legal system-impacted youth.

Strategy 3: By 2027, develop and launch two youth-created content initiatives focused on youth leadership for equity and justice to be disseminated in schools and youth-serving organizations.



Institutional Transformation



GOAL 1 :

By 2026, CCEJ will create, promote and implement an equity and justice model for institutional transformation for schools (K-12 & higher education), nonprofit organizations, and the juvenile criminal legal system.

Strategy 1: By 2025, design a model for institutional transformation based in Equity and Transformation, centering Restorative Justice practices.

Strategy 2: By 2026, pilot a model for institutional transformation based in Equity and Transformation and Restorative Justice with two institutions.

Strategy 3: By 2027, implement five adult program offerings to align with the institutional transformation model.

Telling Our Story



GOAL 1 :

By 2026, CCEJ will increase its visibility in Southern California.

Strategy 1: By 2025, create and launch a marketing and branding communications plan to promote CCEJ's work in Southern California.

Strategy 2: By 2026, create a new name, logo and tagline for CCEJ to align with updated vision and mission.



GOAL 2 :

By 2026, CCEJ will use qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate and share the impact of its work.

Strategy 1: By 2025, establish measurable quantitative and qualitative outcomes for each CCEJ program.

Strategy 2: By 2026, engage six program alumni in storytelling to share the impact of CCEJ's work on their lives.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The development of this plan was truly a team effort and reflects the voices and ideas of our board, staff and partners. We are grateful for the dedication and insight the following people brought to this process:

CCEJ Board of Directors

Rabbi Howard Laibson, Chair
Megan Kerr, Chair-Elect
Hank Feldman, Secretary
Desarie Gonzales, Member At-Large
Yair Katz, Treasurer
Rosecarrie Brooks, Immediate Past Chair
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