



## **Orange County**

### **Applicant:**

Fiscal Agent: Charitable Ventures of Orange County

Regional Convener: Orange County Business Council

### **Contact:**

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**Award:** \$5,000,000

*"Orange County is a microcosm of all great things about California, multi-culturalism, beaches, sunny weather, and educated workforce that drives a powerful economy, but also its ills, such as severe economic inequality and higher and higher housing costs that squeeze middle and low-income residents."*

### **Project Description:**

Orange County High Road Transition Collaborative will be the first cross sector collaborative in the region with the mission of driving equitable, sustainable, and resilient economic development. Our vision is to realize an economy that can support residents in disinvested communities with pathways to move up the economic ladder and grow quality jobs in industry sectors that can withstand economic downturns and expedite California's green energy revolution, moving forward together with a collective and diverse decision-making body.

Orange County has one of the most diverse and powerful economies in the United States. Orange County's largest employment sectors are construction, tourism, and health services, and is a leader in sectors such as dental laboratories, computer storage device manufacturing, surgical and medical instrument manufacturing, and biomass electric power generation. While growing, OC suffers from significant income inequality. Real wages for top earners increased by 24% between 1979 and 2016, but wages for low earners decreased by 26%. Lower-paying jobs are expected to account for the majority of county job growth. Retail, hospitality, and tourism employ entry-level workers at wages insufficient for the county's cost-of-living. Poverty is disproportionately concentrated in immigrant communities in northern and central OC. This



initiative will recognize these long-standing hardships and design strategies and policies aimed at supporting these residents.

This grant's fiscal agent will be Charitable Ventures, a 501(c)(3) community-based organization that offers incubation, social impact consulting, regional collaboration supports, and grant administration to help other community-based organizations maximize impact. The Orange County Business Council (OCBC) will serve as the HRTC Regional Convenor. OCBC's mission is to enhance Orange County's economic development so that the region's vibrant economy continues to expand, bringing the benefits of prosperity to every person in Orange County. OCBC and its predecessor organizations have promoted economic development in the region for over 125 years.