



## Big vision fuels CVCF team expansion

Pursuit of the Central Valley Community Foundation's (CVCF) big vision, "The Central Valley: No barriers. Just opportunity. All people.," has fueled the organization's record team expansion. Over approximately the past six months, CVCF has welcomed five new hires who have proven to excel in the five new roles, as the organization works to deliver transformational investment in the Central San Joaquin Valley region.

### Impact

Leading the organization's Impact Team, former COO **Elliott Balch** is moving into the role of Chief Impact Officer. This newly created position recognizes that the scope of CVCF's programmatic activities has quickly grown. Not only did this team issue \$7 million in CVCF-directed grants and scholarships in 2021, but the team is facilitating thousands of hours of work this year to grow and develop the Fresno DRIVE (Developing the Region's Inclusive and Vibrant Economy) collective impact initiative aimed at over \$4 billion of transformative investment in the region.

Recently CVCF welcomed the following Impact Team members:

**Karen Aceves**, Director of Grants and Contracts, is an experienced former city finance director and grant manager in Southern California who moved to Fresno a year ago to be near family. Aceves's portfolio covers a wide range of activity, from internal-facing grant and scholarship process improvement, to leading work with dozens of regional partners to develop a major, multicomponent federal funding proposal aimed at boosting the region's technology-driven economy and food systems. | August '21

**Christy Patch, JD, PhD**, Senior Program Officer for Collective Impact, is leading CVCF's crosscutting backbone support for the Fresno DRIVE initiative. A Fresno native, attorney, and public health researcher who previously led a collective impact initiative in San Diego County, Dr. Patch is quarterbacking the complex and intense process for bringing the entire DRIVE portfolio of programs forward to implementation with equitable, accountable plans for results, and processes established for evaluating and learning over time. | November '21

**Julie Vue**, Program Officer for Racial Equity, will make her full-time start at CVCF in late April. Vue, a Fresno native, has been Director of Youth and Education Programs for the Orange County Human Relations Council, a nonprofit organization working to advance intersectional equity and violence prevention in partnership with schools, corporations, cities, foundations and individuals. Her work at CVCF will center on Fresno DRIVE as the initiative takes on new challenges and opportunities to ensure resident oversight and ownership. | March '22

Additional Impact Team members include: Senior Program Officer **Artie Padilla**, Program Officer **Marcos Osorio**, and Program Associate **Phuong Bui-Sears**.

"The Impact team maintains a laser focus on building the region's ability to absorb capital investment, while simultaneously reversing the racial inequities that have held our region back from realizing inclusive prosperity," said CVCF CEO **Ashley Swearengin**. "Our growing team of superstars creates a strong backbone for coordinated, collective action to transform our community."

## Advancement and Operations

**Heather Brown** joins CVCF as the new Chief Operating Officer on March 21. In this role, Brown will lead the organization's Advancement Team, which works to connect CVCF to local donors, statewide partners, and funders beyond the region, highlighting work happening in the Valley and at CVCF. Brown will simultaneously work internally to coordinate staff support and development team wide. Brown was previously the Chief Administrative Officer at the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission, has an extensive background in human resources, and had been a CVCF board member since 2021.

**Taylor Kimber** is CVCF's Local Philanthropy Manager. Kimber returned to her native Fresno from the Bay Area where she served as a District Representative, is in frequent contact with CVCF's donors and is responsible for initiatives to connect and unite the donor community. | September '21

Other Advancement Team members include Director of Local Philanthropy **Hannah Johnson**, Director of External Affairs **Sarah Moffat**, Merced Regional Director **Cori Lucero**, and Communications Manager **Chelsea Rasmussen**.

"The work of Heather and the Advancement team ensure people in our Valley and beyond know what innovative work is happening at CVCF and all around us in our communities," said CVCF Board Chair **Rod Thornton**. "The board has vision of making CVCF's work scalable and sustainable, and the Advancement team has our enthusiastic support in making that vision a reality."

Also essential in supporting the organization's growth, is the Stewardship Team led by Chief Financial Officer **Kerri Horn**, and includes the following roles: Controller **Travis Jeffus**, Director of Donor Services

**Claudia-Ruiz Alvarez**, Staff Accountant **Larry Marquez**, and Donor Services and Accounts Payable Associate **Zakary Jobe**.

## Board of Directors

In 2022, three community leaders joined CVCF's board:

- **Desrie van Putten** is President of Guarantee Real Estate. Van Putten was born and raised in Fresno and brings over 11 years of real estate experience.
- **Maria Lemus** is District Director for State Assembly Member Dr. Joaquin Arambula. Lemus is also a business owner who provides campaign-related consulting services.
- **Paul Gibson** brings broad experience in business ownership, finance, teaching, administration, and nonprofit governance. He is an author and longtime philanthropist.

As part of the CVCF board of up to 23, other directors include:

- **Rod Thornton**, Chair
- **Diego Arambula**, Vice Chair
- **Justin Vartanian**, Vice Chair
- **Doug Morgan**, Treasurer
- **Vivian Velasco Paz, Esq.**, Secretary
- **Oliver Baines**
- **Pastor DJ Criner**
- **Hon. Mark Cullers**
- **Brandon Esraelian, Esq.**
- **Craig Fourchy**
- **Misty Her**
- **Mas Masumoto**
- **Jim Maxwell**
- **JP Shamshoian**
- **Jolene Telles**

“In my role managing hiring processes as COO, the number one thing I’ve shared with new recruits about CVCF is how the support of our board has instilled an ambitious culture that everyone on the team can feel,” said Chief Impact Officer Elliott Balch. “With grace and good humor, they continue to challenge us, themselves, and our community to be satisfied with nothing short of transformative impact.”

## Office Relocation

As part of the next-level evolution in its service to the community and to accommodate its growing team, CVCF will be relocating to a new office on Downtown Fresno’s Fulton Street. During the transition the team will be working remotely during the month of April. Typical business operation will resume Monday, May 2, 2022 in the new location.