



News Release

For Immediate Release

November 17, 2022 – Trailblazing Local Program Expands Access Across Los Angeles

"emPOWER" brings energy savings and support to low-income communities

(Los Angeles)— Everyone has the right to live in a healthy community, free from pollution, and with access to safe, accessible, and affordable utilities that can help keep residents safe from extreme weather conditions. That's why "emPOWER," a groundbreaking local environmental justice program, is expanding beyond L.A. County to bring savings, upgrades, and clean energy to more low-income Southern California residents.

[The emPOWER program](#) is a coordinated L.A. County-wide outreach program with a mission to overcome barriers to sustainable energy usage commonly experienced in low-income and working-class communities of color.

With the current expansion, emPOWER will bring available services to expanded areas of Los Angeles County, as well as Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, working with local organizations to build a model that tackles issues of environmental and climate justice, while addressing the immediate needs facing low-income communities of color.

Alongside the service expansion, the emPOWER program is also releasing its new 2022-23 [Guide to Green](#), a free resource residents across the region can use to find available programs focused on bill savings, clean mobility, and healthy homes—which can include services such as lead remediation, insulation repair, and other quality of life improvements.

"We've seen many of the residents we serve in South L.A. struggling to pay their utility bills or dealing with sudden car expenses," said Martha Lozano, a Community Organizer with Redeemer Community Partnership, one of the local emPOWER organizations. "Through emPOWER, we've built a support system for residents that not only helps them financially but also supports their mental health and overall wellness, and it's made the communities we serve stronger and more hopeful even during these difficult times."

Since its launch in 2019—emPOWER—a coalition of community-based organizations across Los Angeles County—has been working to ensure those hurt most by toxic neighborhood pollution, high heat, and increasing utility bills can access the millions of dollars provided by State and local agencies to combat climate change.

The coalition includes local organizations such as Liberty Hill Foundation, Redeemer Community Partnership, Pacoima Beautiful, the Latino/Latina Roundtable, United American Indian Involvement, SoCal Pacific Islander COVID-19 Response Team, Training Occupational Development Educating Communities, and ValleyClean Air Now (VCAN). Funding for the program comes from Southern California Edison and GoBiz.

The emPOWER model funds programs that prioritize support to low-income and marginalized communities through tools such as financial aid and discounts on utility bills, assistance with energy-efficient home repairs and upgrades, and the transition to clean transportation through road replacement rebate programs for hybrid and electric cars.

"I've had the opportunity to work on many pieces of legislation that promote clean energy, clean air, and environmental justice, and the community-based organizations within the emPOWER program are making a difference," said California Majority Leader Assemblymember Eloise Gomez Reyes of the 47th district. "My district in the Inland Empire is fraught with issues such as poor air quality and the resulting adverse health conditions this can cause. I appreciate the support our grassroots partners are providing to residents to help combat these issues."

To date, through a combination of community engagement events, social media engagement, ride and drive clinics, as well as virtual meet-ups, the program has provided services to more than 517,000 people.

With this expansion, the emPOWER program plans to expand access and information on these critical services to hundreds of thousands of additional local residents, as well as support the creation of regional models in communities across California.

"Change starts locally and it's important that elected officials connect with groups doing frontline work," said California State Senator Connie M. Leyva, of District 20. "We introduce policies and find funding for important initiatives, but programs like emPOWER can connect low-income residents to resources faster and more effectively than we can. If it weren't for the work that the emPOWER coalition has been doing on the ground, none of the work we do in Sacramento would even matter."

By providing flexible funding for engagement that centers community knowledge and needs, emPOWER seeks to build power in communities and expand knowledge and usage of clean energy programs.

About Liberty Hill Foundation

Liberty Hill Foundation is a laboratory for social change philanthropy. We leverage the power of community organizers, donor activists, and allies to advance social justice through strategic investment in grants, leadership training, and campaigns. We envision a society in which all people have a powerful voice,

including those currently shut out of our democracy, people cut off from opportunities because of their skin color, gender or sexual orientation, where they live, or where they were born. We will not rest until society provides justice and equality for all.