Western Center fights for justice and system-wide change to secure housing, healthcare and a strong safety net for low-income Californians.
We’re proud to report that in 2014, over 8 million Californians were aided by Western Center’s advocacy and litigation.

And we plan on doing more in 2015.

In 2014, we successfully advocated to increase CalWORKs grants for families by 5%, augmenting their benefits by over $150 million. We eliminated the lifetime ban on welfare for individuals with drug felonies. We helped stop the construction of a massive waste dump in a low-income community and saved the homes of poor mobile-home park residents. Our efforts helped expand public benefits eligibility to first-time pregnant women upon verification of a 2nd trimester pregnancy. We’ve secured over $100 million in new state funding for affordable housing.

Western Center has big plans and new campaigns for 2015 and 2016. Over the next several years, national policy efforts on behalf of the country’s most vulnerable residents are destined to be defensive in nature. By contrast, California presents exciting opportunities to proactively expand rights and benefits for our clients.

New victories in California can help transform the national dialogue about poverty and justice and ultimately spur positive changes in other states and in the national consciousness. Western Center will be at the forefront of these efforts.

Western Center’s past and future victories are gratefully shared with our colleagues and supporters. We invite you to join our family and be part of this crucial work.
Western Center on Law & Poverty | 2015 Annual Report

WESTERN CENTER: Bridging the Justice Gap

WHO WE SERVE
8.3 MILLION PEOPLE BELOW 125% OF POVERTY LEVEL

- 4.4 million women and girls
- 3.4 million immigrants
- 2.8 million children
- 2.8 million people below 50% of poverty level
- 1.1 million people with disabilities

ETHNICITY

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We attain real-world, system-wide solutions on behalf of all low-income Californians through litigation, legislative and policy advocacy, and technical assistance and legal support for the state legal aid programs.

We are California’s oldest and largest legal services support center.
Some of the people who benefited from our 2014 advocacy

- **6.3 million** Adults on Medi-Cal became eligible for dental services
- **Over 500,000** Families received an increase in needed cash aid, helping more than one million children
- **12 million** Children and adults now have Medi-Cal coverage
- **100,000** New recipients received SNAP food assistance
- **Tens of Thousands** Innocent tenants caught in landlord foreclosures were protected

Western Center on Law & Poverty was founded in 1967 by a passionate group of attorneys and legal scholars who sought to create a unique organization, driven by the belief that low-income Californians deserve the finest possible legal representation before every institution that shapes their lives.
LEGISLATIVE & BUDGET ADVOCACY

LIFETIME BAN ON WELFARE REPEALED
Benefiting indigent individuals

After 17 years of advocacy, California’s lifetime ban on receiving welfare for people with prior drug-related convictions was repealed. *(Budget)*

CALWORKS GRANT INCREASE TOTALING $150 MILLION FOR 1.4 MILLION PEOPLE
Benefiting mothers and children

One million children and their parents obtained a 5% increase in their monthly grant, helping families meet their basic housing, food and other needs. *(Budget)*

MILLIONS IN NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUNDING
Benefiting all low-income Californians

10% of future Cap-and-Trade auction revenues will be spent on affordable housing developments that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Separately, a $100 million general fund appropriation for multifamily housing, half of which will go towards permanent supportive housing, was added to the budget. *(Budget)*

ADDITIONAL WINS

- Pregnant women obtain expanded CalWORKs eligibility
  - AB 1579 *(Stone)*

- New consumer protections for millions of welfare recipients
  - AB 1614 *(Stone)*
  - AB 2252 *(Speaker Emeritus John A. Pérez)*

- Barriers eliminated for hundreds of thousands of low-income college students
  - AB 1930 *(Skinner)*

- Unfair penalties eliminated for 1 million poor school children
  - AB 2382 *(Bradford)*

- New health care coverage for pregnant women *(Budget)*

- Previously eliminated adult dental care restored *(Budget)*

- New streamlined Medi-Cal notice, appeals and renewal processes
  - AB 617 and *(Nazarian)*
  - SB18 *(Leno/Hernández)*

- Poor households gain reasonable payment plan option for hospital bills
  - SB 1276 *(Hernández)*
Inspired by Stephanie and other pregnant women living in poverty, Western Center led advocacy efforts to successfully pass Assembly Bill 1579 (Stone).

It was September of 2012 and Stephanie was living on the streets for the first time in her life. Stephanie just found out she was pregnant after she and her boyfriend both lost their fast food jobs. Stephanie sought help through legal aid, but found she would not be eligible for CalWORKs benefits until she was in her third trimester.

She had nowhere to go. The shelter for pregnant women was full. After being without a home for two months, things got worse. Stephanie had lost weight and now found herself alone, when her boyfriend was arrested after defending Stephanie from another man’s attack. When asked where she would go when she went into labor and what her plan was, Stephanie just shrugged. At six months pregnant, she had not had a prenatal visit. She looked forward to reaching the 3rd trimester, when she would become eligible for CalWORKs and Medi-Cal. With the small grant of less than $400 per month, Stephanie could get a place to live, stabilize her life and “figure things out.”

Inspired by Stephanie and other pregnant women living in poverty, Western Center led advocacy efforts to successfully pass Assembly Bill 1579 (Stone), which now allows pregnant women in their 2nd trimester to receive assistance through CalWORKs upon verification of pregnancy. Designed to prevent homelessness and insure the health of newborns, this new law is a major step forward for pregnant women throughout California.
OLIVER’S STORY

Oliver joined in support of Rivera v. Douglas, which resulted in a major victory for hundreds of thousands of Californians whose Medi-Cal applications must now be decided within 45 days.

When health care reform became a reality in January 2014, millions of Californians sought to enroll in Medi-Cal. Unfortunately, the applications for hundreds of thousands of eligible applicants were filed but not processed, some for nearly a year, leaving families and individuals in medical limbo. Oliver Rogers was one of them. As a married father of two girls, he has managed to support his family as a waiter and through other part-time work, while going to school with the goal of becoming an engineer. But like many, he did not receive health benefits from his employer, who told Oliver that he would be fired if he didn’t get his own coverage. He applied for Medi-Cal for himself and his family but did not hear from the County or the State for months.

During this period, Oliver sustained a hand injury that landed him in the emergency room. Although the damage was severe, he asked himself whether he should stay to be treated. He wondered, “Can I live with the pain?” Knowing he couldn’t and that it could affect his ability to work, he remained and was treated in the hospital, hopeful that his application would be processed. Two months later, he received a bill from the hospital for $1,841, an amount he could not pay on his monthly income. “With school, work, taking care of my family, and worrying about making ends meet, I often feel stressed. Worrying about how to pay for this bill only added to that stress.”

It took 10 months for Oliver and his family to receive an approval notification for their Medi-Cal application. He didn’t not want other families to go through the same difficulties so he joined in support of Rivera v. Douglas, which resulted in a major victory for hundreds of thousands of Californians whose applications must now be decided within 45 days. Plaintiffs were represented by Western Center, Bay Area Legal Aid, Central California Legal Services, Multiforum Advocacy Solutions, Neighborhood Legal Services, and National Health Law Project.

Western Center is now focusing on expanding coverage for the millions of remaining uninsured Californians, including undocumented residents, and those eligible but not enrolled in coverage.

4.1 million

CALIFORNIANS OBTAINED HEALTH CARE COVERAGE THROUGH THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT
IMPACT LITIGATION

INNOCENT TENANTS VICTIMIZED BY FORECLOSURES PREVAIL

Benefiting low-income tenants nationwide

After five years of litigation in four state and federal courts, plaintiffs garnered a groundbreaking national victory on behalf of tens of thousands of innocent tenants, the forgotten victims of the foreclosure crisis. The court held that leases survive foreclosure and that tenants may sue banks for violations of their statutory rights, even if they live in illegally converted garage units.

Nativi v. Deutsche Bank.
Co-counsel: Bay Area Legal Aid, Alborg, Martin & Budde LLP, Jenner and Block

$3.3 MILLION IN RENT OVERCHARGES RECOVERED FOR PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS

Benefiting public housing residents

More than 9,000 current and former residents in 14 public housing developments in Los Angeles were reimbursed for the rent overcharges from March 2008 until February 2012.

Galindo v. Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.
Co-counsel: LA Center for Law & Justice, National Housing Law Project, Arnold & Porter LLP

VICTORY FOR HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS STUCK IN MEDI-CAL LIMBO

Benefiting Medi-Cal applicants

The California State Department of Health Care Services was ordered to grant provisional benefits to likely Medi-Cal applicants within 45 days of the application submission. Others must be notified within 45 days that they have a right to an administrative hearing to get a decision on eligibility.

Rivera v. Douglas.
Co-counsel: Bay Area Legal Aid, Multiforum Solutions, Neighborhood Legal Services

2014 CASES

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ADDITIONAL WINS

Unavailable income may not be used when calculating welfare grants

Money that is never received by a CalWORKs household but instead is disbursed to pay court-ordered child support cannot be considered as income to the household, trial court rules.

Christensen v. Lightbourne.
Co-counsel: Legal Aid Society of San Mateo

Low-income mobile home residents saved from eviction

The Court prohibited one the nation’s largest mobile home park management companies from pursuing evictions, increasing rents, and threatening residents if they did not sign new leases.

Cruz v. Sierra Corporate Management.
Co-counsel: Legal Aid Society of San Mateo

Massive waste facility slated for Sun Valley stopped

The City of Los Angeles was ordered to set aside its approval of a proposal to build a massive waste facility in Sun Valley, a poor and predominantly Latino community.

Comunidad en Acción v. Los Angeles City Council, et al.
Co-counsel: Neighborhood Legal Services
ADMINISTRATIVE ADVOCACY

HEALTH CARE FOR IMMIGRANTS

Benefiting refugees

Western Center advocates helped preserve continuous healthcare coverage for thousands of immigrants in the Refugee Resettlement Program by persuading the State to transition them into Medi-Cal, rather than disenrolling them from coverage.

LANGUAGE ACCESS IN COURTS

Benefiting immigrants

Western Center advocates participated in numerous workgroups and planning meeting with legal services partners aimed at ensuring that the Judicial Council approved Strategic Plan for Language Access in the California Courts met the needs of low income clients.

BASIC NEEDS PROTECTED IN SAN DIEGO

Benefiting the poorest individuals

Western Center, Disability Rights CA and Fish & Richardson persuaded San Diego County to increase the monthly General Relief benefit amount; stop turning away people with $5 in their wallets, and end unpaid labor requirements.

ADDITIONAL WINS

Health plans’ efforts to delay consumer enrollment in Covered CA rebuffed

Continuous coverage preserved for 95,000 Californians moving from Covered California to Medi-Cal

New trainings devised for Medi-Cal and Covered CA insurance agents and enrollment counselors

Over 30 All County Welfare Directors Letters reviewed, leading to better services for clients

Counties agreed to send out language appropriate notices to individuals who failed to complete proof of citizenship status form

State agreed to revamp its website to encourage eligible Medi-Cal applicants to apply

Covered California clarified their online application and made significant changes to renewal letters, forms and notices

Why Administrative Advocacy (Working in the Weeds) is Meaningful

Administrative Advocacy commonly does not produce the “headline” results of litigation or legislative advocacy. However, interceding in public agency deliberations, notices and rulemaking by Western Center and the larger community of advocates often makes vast improvement in the lives of our clients.
ROSIE’S STORY

After 17 years of hard work by Western Center advocates, California has repealed the state law which banned food and basic needs assistance to people who had a prior drug-felony conviction.

Rosie was born in Southern California to an abusive father and a mother with severe mental illness. She was given narcotics as a young child by a relative charged with caring for her, but instead robbed her of her innocence. He was later arrested for the child pornography photos he took of Rosie. By the time she was 12, Rosie was on the streets, on her way to a life of crime and addiction. With no adult to care for her, Rosie was in and out of the juvenile justice system, never receiving the mental health care she desperately needed.

For several years, Rosie waded in and out of police custody and abusive relationships. She couldn’t raise her first two children and asked her sister to raise them. It was after the birth of her third son that something changed for Rosie. “One day, I saw my son look at me after my boyfriend beat me up and I could see the spirit leaving from his eyes,” said Rosie. She reached out to our transitional housing partner, Starting Over, Inc., and has been sober since.

Still, even though complying with her probation and a commitment to sobriety, Rosie couldn’t make it out of poverty. Because California employed the optional ban for people with a prior drug-related felony conviction, she was denied basic needs assistance, job training, and child care. She and her son lived off of $300 in cash assistance and anything extra she earned with odd jobs.

After nearly two decades of hard work by Western Center advocates, California has repealed the state law which banned food and basic needs assistance to people who had a prior drug-felony conviction. Approximately six thousand families will now experience hunger less often and will be supported in work training thanks to heartfelt testimonies like Rosie’s in the State Legislature that led to the overturn of the wrongheaded law. Today, Rosie holds her head high. She knows that things will get better, not only for her, but for others.
AMARANDA’S STORY

Low-income mobile home residents saved from eviction

A family’s home is its safe place. That safety and comfort was almost taken from Amaranda Patricio and hundreds of other mobile park home residents in San Mateo County.

Ms. Patricio, a single mother of two boys, worked cleaning houses to give her kids safe and stable housing and better opportunities. She used all of her savings to purchase a mobile home and signed a 25-year site lease, written in English legalese, with Bayshore Villa Mobile Home Park. Speaking to Ms. Patricio in Spanish, her native language, the park manager had told her that the rent would only go up by 5% each year.

Initially, the park charged the appropriate amount but, after a few years, it began to raise the rent astronomically. Ms. Patricio’s space rent went up 79% in 5 years and became unaffordable. She could not afford to move her mobile home or move to an apartment in San Mateo or the surrounding counties. Moving far away would mean a different school for her youngest, interrupted medical care for her oldest, and losing her business clients. She would also lose the investment in her mobile home.

Ms. Patricio was not alone. The park owner had been using incomprehensible leases and suddenly raising rents throughout the park. Ms. Patricio and other Bayshore families decided to stand up to this injustice with the help of Western Center and our co-counsel, the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County and Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy. She filed a class action lawsuit, alleging that the park owner, one of the nation’s largest management companies, had violated state and local law, had breached its lease with residents, and had engaged in unfair business practices. A San Mateo Superior Court judge issued a preliminary injunction in Cruz v. Sierra Corporate Management, prohibiting the park owner from increasing rents, evicting residents based on nonpayment of those contested rents, threatening unnamed plaintiffs with the risk of paying attorneys' fees for being class members, and trying to offer residents new leases that purport to waive any rights under the lawsuit.

At $9 per hour, the gross monthly wages for a full time minimum wage worker is $1,560. Western Center is co-sponsoring legislation in 2015 to increase the minimum wage.
Over 100 key housing advocates, government officials, legislative staff and policy makers from around the state met to discuss affordable housing preservation, homelessness, financing and planning, special needs populations, and more to prioritize how they can best work together to secure affordable housing for low-income Californians.

Health consumer advocates from around the state gathered in Sacramento for this invitation only event to learn about recent policy developments and help craft a policy agenda to maximize access to quality, affordable health care for low-income Californians.

Western Center staff chaired programs, presented live and webcast trainings, and contributed to publications for multiple PLI programs including California Eviction Defense and California Public Benefits. Western Center experts trained on diverse topics including CalWORKs, Medi-Cal and the Affordable Care Act, Writs & Appeals, Protections for California Tenants in Foreclosed Homes, and Fair Housing Protections.

**WESTERN CENTER HOUSING SUMMIT**

*Strategies to create affordable housing*

**WESTERN CENTER HEALTH POLICY SUMMIT**

*ObamaCare and beyond*

**PRACTICING LAW INSTITUTE (PLI) PROGRAMS AND WEBINARS**

*Core training for poverty law attorneys*

**TRAININGS & PUBLICATIONS, SUCH AS**

**TRAININGS:**
- Housing Task Force Trainings
- Health & Welfare Task Force Trainings
- Public Benefits Road Show
- Racial Justice Training Institute
- Students and CalWORKs: Know Your Rights
- Language Access
- Medical Debt
- Mobilehome Tenancies 101
- Legal Skills Training Series (Writs, Declarations, Amicus)
- Health Care Options for Immigrants
- Unlawful Detainer Appeals
- Administrative Hearings basics

**PUBLICATIONS:**
- Legal Services Practice Tip Series
- Health Care Legislation Affecting Low-Income Consumers Series
- Consumer Fact Sheets for the Health Consumer Alliance
- State Budget Bulletin
- San Diego General Relief Program Changes
- California Public Benefit Programs
- Legislature Takes Historic Steps to Address Poverty in State Budget
- Court-awarded attorneys’ fees
- Access to Justice Update

**2014 SUPPORT CENTER SERVICE STATISTICS**

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“As chairperson of the Assembly Budget Committee, the best advocacy that came before me was led by Western Center on Law and Poverty staff. Low-income Californians are better off because of the Center’s work which goes far beyond other advocacy organizations their size.”

Former Assemblymember Nancy Skinner
Thank You!

to our

Colleagues, Partners & Supporters
York v. City of Fullerton

This suit challenges the City of Fullerton’s illegal refusal to approve a County-funded shelter and facilitate desperately needed homeless shelter, in violation of the City Council’s own recommendations.

“Sheppard Mullin proudly supports the Western Center in its mission to protect California’s underserved. We are committed to providing legal service to those who cannot afford it and are honored to be partnering with the Western Center on a case to remedy discrimination against homeless families and individuals in the City of Fullerton.”

Cruz v. Sierra Corporate Management

This suit seeks to prevent the practice of bait and switch for mobile home residents in Silicon Valley lured by short term promotional rates, only to see them increase in some cases by 100% percent.

“Our firm is privileged to work with both the Western Center, as well as Legal Aid Society of San Mateo, in fighting to end a practice that hurts lower income folks in an area of necessity; namely housing. Our attorneys have found it quite refreshing to work with Western Center, whose legal mission is analogous to ours -- to fight for those most in need.”

Our 2014 Pro Bono Partners

- Akin Gump LLP
- Alborg, Martin & Budde LLP
- Alston and Bird LLP
- Arnold & Porter LLP
- Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP
- Brancart & Brancart
- Briggs Law Corporation
- Cotchett, Pitre & McCarty LLP
- Fish & Richardson P.C
- Garden City Group Inc.
- Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP
- Greenberg Traurig LLP
- Haynes and Boone LLP
- Hooper Lundy & Bookman P.C
- Horvitz and Levy LLP
- Irell and Manella LLP
- Jenner and Block
- Jennison & Dodds LLP
- Justice Earl Johnson (Ret.)
- KP Public Affairs
- Kirkland & Ellis LLP
- Latham & Watkins LLP
- Law Offices of Chandra Spencer
- Lewis, Feinberg, Lee, Renaker & Jackson
- Manatt, Phelps & Phillips LLP
- Morrison & Foerster LLP
- Multiforum Advocacy Solutions
- Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP
- O’Melveny & Myers LLP
- Paul Hastings LLP
- Perkins Coie LLP
- PwC P.C
- Proskauer Rose P.C
- Reed Smith LLP
- Scheper, Kim & Harris LLP
- Seyfarth Shaw LLP
- Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP
- Sidley Austin LLP
- Southwestern Law School
- Strook & Strook & Lavan LLP
- Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP
- Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati PC
Thank you to our
LEGAL AID & PUBLIC INTEREST LAW PARTNERS!

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<td>Mental Health Advocacy Services</td>
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<td>National Consumer Law Center</td>
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<td>National Health Law Program</td>
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<td>Public Law Center</td>
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<td>Riverside Legal Aid</td>
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<td>San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program, Inc.</td>
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<td>Santa Clara University’s Katherine &amp; George Alexander Community Law Center</td>
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<td>Sargent Shriver National Center</td>
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<td>Senior Adults Legal Assistance</td>
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<td>Senior Citizens Legal Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>UC Davis School of Law Legal Clinics</td>
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<td>USD School of Law Legal Clinics</td>
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<td>Voluntary Legal Services Program of Northern California</td>
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<td>Wage Justice Center</td>
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<td>WorkSafe Law Center</td>
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<td>Youth Law Center</td>
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<td>Yuba-Sutter Legal Center for Seniors</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

We also are profoundly grateful for our partnerships with hundreds of other wonderful community-based organizations working on behalf of low-income Californians.

“Western Center is vital to me as a legal aid advocate. Every person I’ve worked with at Western Center is a compassionate and ardent anti-poverty champion. They set the standard for leadership in justice and it is an honor to work with them.”

- Cori Racela, Associate Director of Policy & Litigation, Neighborhood Legal Services of L.A. County
Thank you to our top donors who have invested in the work of Western Center

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WHY I JOINED THE WESTERN CENTER LEGACY SOCIETY

“Western Center has been a powerful voice for the underserved in California for nearly fifty years, providing essential legal services in the areas of health care, housing and public benefits. I know that this work will remain critical for the future well-being of our community. My legacy gift will help ensure that Western Center has the resources in the future to fulfill its commitment to advancing and enforcing the rights of those in need. Supporting such important work with a planned gift has enabled me to contribute to Western Center in a truly meaningful way.”

Jeffrey Paule - proud Legacy Society member
HUFFPOST BUSINESS

Banks Swipe Millions From Welfare Recipients

“Banks don't need this money. They don't need it like a child who's living 50 percent below the poverty line needs the money.”

- Jessica Bartholow, Legislative Advocate

Los Angeles Times

L.A. faces lawsuit over trash fees charged to low-income tenants

“Twenty-four dollars can make a huge difference for families who are low-income, it's medical co-pay. It's food. It's groceries for a few days. It's school supplies.”

- Navneet Grewal, Senior Attorney

SF Gateway

Funding reopens dental services to low-income patients

“We are so thrilled about the restoration. All of the adults who had Medi-Cal will finally be able to get teeth fixed instead of getting them pulled.”

- Elizabeth Landsberg, Director of Legislative Policy

Some of the other media outlets that interviewed and cited our staff in 2014:
### 2014 FINANCIALS

#### REVENUE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants &amp; Contracts</td>
<td>$1,312,241</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attorneys’ Fees</td>
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<td>Endowment Contribution</td>
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<td>Contributions</td>
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<td>Cy Pres</td>
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<td>Interest &amp; Investments</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>Carry Over</td>
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#### EXPENSES

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>General &amp; Administrative</td>
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<td>Fundraising</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
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Western Center thanks Shepard Fairey, who has very kindly allowed us to feature his incredible artwork, “We Own The Future,” on the cover of our 2015 Annual Report.

Shepard Fairey was born in Charleston, S.C. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Illustration at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence, R.I. While at R.I.S.D., he created the “Andre the Giant has a Posse” sticker that transformed into the OBEY GIANT art campaign, with imagery that has changed the way people see art and the urban landscape. His work has evolved into an acclaimed body of art, which includes the 2008 “Hope” portrait of Barack Obama, which can be found in the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery.

Fairey created the first of his iconic works in 1989, making 2014 the 25 year mark of his career. In addition to his guerrilla street art presence, the artist has executed more than 43 large-scale painted public murals around the world as of 2015. His works are in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery, the Boston Institute of Contemporary Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and many others.

For more information, visit www.OBEYG IANT.com

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Our Sacramento Advocates

Photography by Bill Devlin  
www.billdevlinphotography.com

Design by Dani Vinokurov  
www.danivinokurov.com

Printed by The House of Printing, Inc.  
www.thehouseofprinting.com

WESTERN CENTER  
ON LAW & POVERTY

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