

COMMUNITY REPORT 2024



At CAUSE, we believe that social transformation is not a momentary effort but a generational journey. As we reflect on the past year, we are reminded of the seeds we've planted together – sustainability, strategy, and scale for our movements that will grow into lasting change for our Central Coast communities despite what will occur on the federal political stage in the years to come.

In 2024, these seeds took root in inspiring ways. From organizing farmworkers and immigrant tenants to achieve historic wins, to cultivating grassroots leadership through our new CAUSE Power Assembly, our work has demonstrated the power of investing in people and collective action. Last year, we didn't just respond to challenges; we built long-term solutions by growing alliances, organizing, and equipping new leaders to carry our movement forward. We have built the power needed to defend our communities while continuing to advance policies that reflect our values.

Your support makes this possible. Whether as a donor, a partner, organizer, or an advocate, your belief in our mission sustains our work and strengthens our impact.

Together, we've championed bold housing policies, advanced environmental justice, and empowered working families to take their futures into their own hands.

Looking ahead, we remain focused on the ideals that unite us: tenant rights, immigrant worker power, and environmental justice. By supporting CAUSE, you're investing in a future where the seeds we plant today grow into forests of opportunity, equity, and sustainability for generations to come.

We invite you to explore the highlights of our work from 2024 in this report, and more importantly, to deepen your connection to this movement and our collective impact. Because of you, we are building a Central Coast where every voice matters and every community thrives.

With gratitude,

Lucas Zucker & Hazel Davalos
Co-Executive Directors, CAUSE



BUILDING IMMIGRANT WORKER POWER

The movement to build immigrant worker power on the Central Coast made extraordinary strides in 2024, with CAUSE and our partners leading the charge from Santa Maria to Oxnard and across California. Alianza Campesina, the farmworker-led coalition founded by CAUSE and MICOP, championed a Santa Barbara County living wage campaign advocating for a \$26/hour minimum wage for agricultural workers. This effort mobilized hundreds of farmworkers, earned widespread media attention, and was anchored by our *Harvesting Dignity* report, which underscores the urgent need for a living wage to sustain agriculture in our region. Through marches, deep organizing, and mass mobilizations, the campaign prompted the Santa Barbara County Supervisors to form an ad-hoc committee to explore solutions. While the Board has not committed to advance a living wage ordinance, the momentum generated last year for justice for farmworkers will continue to grow, amplifying farmworker voices, and further building our power to continue this vital fight in the year ahead.

Statewide, the California Farmworker Coalition partnered with Assemblymember Liz Ortega to hold a critical hearing in Sacramento addressing hazardous working conditions, with CAUSE testifying to state lawmakers, advocating for measures such as increasing Cal/OSHA inspectors and improving worker-employer communication. In 2024, we also advanced workers' rights through Dar a Luz, a collaboration with WorkLife Law, to inform pregnant and postpartum farmworkers of their legal protections. Locally, we worked with MICOP and Lideres Campesinas to launch Project MILPA, a transformational effort to build farmworker cooperatives in Ventura County. This effort was supported by two years of research, resulting in our *Healing Land, Collective Power* report. Meanwhile, the California Worker Outreach Program (CWOP) solidified its role as a cornerstone of worker education. In its fourth year, CAUSE ran two 10-week promotor programs, reaching nearly 4,000 workers and training 900 participants. Due to persistent advocacy, we worked with partners statewide to secure \$30 million in state funding to make CWOP permanent. While we celebrate these victories, we recognize there is much work ahead to achieve enduring justice and equity for immigrant workers.



Photo credit: David Bacon



ORGANIZING FOR HOMES FOR ALL

The housing crisis remains a painful reality for our communities, but we're making strides toward creating a Central Coast where affordable, stable, and quality housing is accessible to everyone. In Oxnard, corporate landlords are taking advantage of immigrant and farmworker families for profit with unfair evictions, rent increases, and unsafe living conditions. In response, we are organizing. Hundreds of families from apartment complexes across the city last year united to build tenant power. Through collective organizing and advocacy, we not only won crucial negotiations with corporate landlords but also secured citywide policy changes to protect others from similar struggles. Meanwhile, the Ventura County Housing Coalition, which CAUSE helped establish, continued to grow, bringing together affordable housing developers and community organizations to push for housing solutions and ensure affordable homes are built in our communities right now.

In Santa Barbara, we organized tenants and shifted the public conversation in major ways. We responded to renovictions by working in coalition to strengthen local eviction protections throughout South Santa Barbara County, and got the City of Santa Barbara to invest a quarter million dollars for legal aid for tenants in the Central Coast's first-ever right to counsel program.



It was a year of overcoming challenges – defending homes from predatory corporate landlords – and of dreaming and organizing for a future where everyone in our region has access to housing, because we know that homes are more than shelter; they are where families create memories, build community, and find joy.



ADVOCATING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

In 2024, our advocacy for environmental justice and climate resilience made significant progress across the Central Coast. In Ventura County, we celebrated the opening of the Santa Clara River Preserve, following nine years of engaging residents in Santa Paula about how to expand access to green space. Over the summer, CAUSE Youth Fellows conducted outreach in Ventura's Westside to seek input on the future Mariano Rancho Preserve, managed by the Ventura Land Trust. We gathered feedback from over 100 surveys, ensuring that community voices will shape the space's development ahead of its 2025 grand opening. In Santa Paula, CAUSE hosted a Climate Resilience Town Hall and Earth Day celebration, engaging residents to strategize on addressing extreme heat and pollution through collective power.

Our organizing efforts for environmental justice also advanced in Santa Maria, where we launched a pesticide awareness campaign and hosted the first Clean Air Fair, drawing over 100 local farmworker families and youth. The event provided education and advocacy opportunities through art, interactive activities, and a panel discussion with pesticide experts. Additionally, Toxic Tours in Santa Maria and Oxnard gave community members a platform to share experiences of toxic exposure, laying the groundwork for systemic climate action in 2025. At the state level, our advocacy helped secure the passage of AB 1864, establishing stronger protections against pesticide exposure near schools. CAUSE also sent a delegation of youth leaders to Sacramento for the CEJA Congreso, a celebration of collective action and to engage with legislators about the future of environmental justice. These achievements have built momentum, and we will continue to protect our communities and environment in the years to come.



STRENGTHENING THE MOVEMENT

Last summer, CAUSE demonstrated the transformative power of grassroots leadership by bringing together over 250 community members for the inaugural CAUSE Power Assembly. This gathering showcased the strength and unity of our movement, with participants from all five chapter cities coming together to engage deeply with our campaigns, forge stronger community bonds, and strategize for the future. Through a new structure of collaborative decision making, elected delegates from each of our chapters elevated our leaders as the driving force behind housing rights, environmental justice, and immigrant worker power along California's Central Coast. Our community's energy and commitment underscored the undeniable truth: we have the power to shape a just and sustainable region for all, and together, we will continue to lead that charge.



In the spring, CAUSE partnered with the McCune Foundation and the Fund for Santa Barbara to host a three-day Central Coast Community Organizing Training for over 30 organizers and advocates from Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. Participants gained vital skills, including grassroots outreach, relationship building, and campaign strategy training, culminating in hands-on door knocking for rent stabilization in Santa Barbara. Now integrated into the McCune Foundation's Social Justice Academy, this training ensures a steady pipeline of empowered organizers prepared to lead our region.

We also created a regional civic engagement table, Unidos 805, alongside FLA, MICOP, and the FUND – to align and grow the capacity of community organizations to mobilize voters and increase the political voice of communities of color. Between CAUSE's own voter outreach and Unidos 805, we had conversations with over 24,000 voters across the region to turn out for the November election, proving that when we organize together, our collective power becomes unstoppable.



SUPPORT CAUSE

Uplift our organizing for housing and environmental justice and immigrant worker power by making a donation at causenow.org/donate and considering CAUSE in your planned giving.

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