

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact

(240) 838 6570

contact@caravanseraiproject.org

**WELLS FARGO OPEN FOR BUSINESS FUND AWARDS NEARLY \$1M GRANT TO
NONPROFIT PARTNERSHIP FOCUSED ON STRENGTHENING INFRASTRUCTURE IN
THE INLAND EMPIRE OF CALIFORNIA**

Palm Springs, CA, August 17, 2021 – Wells Fargo has awarded a grant of nearly \$1M through its Open for Business Fund, to a partnership between Caravanserai Project, the Inland Empire Community Collaborative (IECC) and the Inland Empire Community Foundation (IECF). The grant advances the partners’ on-going strategic efforts to strengthen the infrastructure and outcomes of mission-driven organizations in the Inland Empire of California through capacity building and technical assistance programs.

During the past 18-months, the organizations have supported hundreds of mission-driven entrepreneurs and organizations, from serving disenfranchised populations to advancing social justice causes and promoting vaccine equity to arts, culture and education agencies in the Inland Empire, the thirteenth most populous metropolitan area in the nation. The grant enables the partners to level-up existing services and launch new initiatives to better serve the current needs of the nonprofits and communities they assist. This includes prioritizing the advancement of minority and BIPOC-led organizations as part of an ongoing commitment to embed diversity, equity and inclusion throughout philanthropic initiatives.

In response to the growing needs that intensified during the pandemic, Caravanserai Project, IECC, and IECF have expanded their efforts to turbo charge local charitable organizations through a range of programs such as webinars and digital strategy workshops, grant bulletins, and Breakthrough Masterclasses as well as a social impact pre-accelerator and a Capacity Building Academy. By the end of 2021, a Professional Certificate in Nonprofit Career Readiness and Advancement (awarded by UCR University Extension) and a regional database for donors’ use will be launched to offer additional resources and tools to mission-driven organizations in the Inland Empire.

By investing in the Inland Empire nonprofit organizational infrastructure, Wells Fargo recognizes the vital role these providers play in delivering essential services, and as drivers of the economy. Treating nonprofits as businesses is a timely approach and comes at a pivotal moment when reimagining new pathways towards irreversible system change based on equity and inclusion is crucial.

“At Wells Fargo, we are committed to assisting organizations like Caravanserai Project, the Inland Empire Community Collaborative and the Inland Empire Community Foundation that strengthen our local community by providing so many resources to our local business community members,” said **Flor Tolley, Wells Fargo Social Impact & Sustainability Vice President**.

Inland Empire Community Foundation President & CEO Michelle Decker said, “The Inland Empire receives one of the lowest shares of philanthropic resources in California and our participation will help donors find nonprofits that meet their passion. The Wells Fargo funding comes at the right time for the region.”

Inland Empire Community Collaborative President Susan Gomez said, “IECC is honored to have been recognized by Wells Fargo to expand programs that will provide targeted support to established and emerging nonprofit and for-profit leaders of color throughout the region. This investment helps change the narrative and strengthen organizations that provide key services to many communities of color.”

Caravanserai Project CEO Mihai Patru said, “This grant from Wells Fargo is a great incentive for the mission-driven sector in the Inland Empire, and an invitation to other stakeholders to invest in the region. Supporting our partnership with IECC and IECF speaks volumes about the value and importance of coming together as organizations and joining our efforts to further advance our visions.”

About Caravanserai Project

[Caravanserai Project](#) is a hybrid social impact venture striving to identify, mobilize and energize mission-driven leaders to build sustainable and future-ready ventures, for profits and nonprofits alike, that will generate irreversible system change. We are actively engaged in supporting mission-driven efforts in the Inland Empire region as well at national and international level. For more information, please visit www.caravanseraiproject.org.

About Inland Empire Community Foundation

Founded in 1941, the [Inland Empire Community Foundation](#) is the oldest and largest community foundation serving the Inland region operating in the largest geographic territory of any community foundation in the nation – more than 27,000 square miles, covering Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. We come to the table with in-depth understanding of the IE and our nonprofit sector, extensive experience with our donors that can make a meaningful difference – now and in the future.

About Inland Empire Community Collaborative

[Inland Empire Community Collaborative](#) (IECC) supports nonprofits to advocate in making the Inland Empire region more equitable, diverse, and just, through capacity building workshops, technical assistance trainings, conferences, collaboration, and nonprofit. IECC has been committed for over 10 years to build organizational capacity using a collective impact model currently bringing together over 87 diverse nonprofits.

###