

LAX Coalition for **Economic,** **Environmental, &** **Educational Justice**

What Is a Community Benefits Agreement?

Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs)—project-specific contracts between developers and community organizations—are safeguards to ensure that local community residents share in the benefits of major developments. They allow community groups to have a voice in shaping a project, press for community benefits that are tailored to their particular needs, and enforce developer’s promises.

The CBA process begins with interested members of the community, who identify how a proposed development project can benefit residents and workers. Once a list of potential benefits is determined, community members meet with the developer and/or representatives of the city to negotiate a CBA. Each CBA is unique, reflecting the needs of particular communities.

History of Community Benefits Agreements

The CBA concept was pioneered by the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), which in 1998 worked with then City-Councilmember Jackie Goldberg to incorporate community benefits provisions into the development agreement for Hollywood and Highland, a large entertainment and retail project in the heart of Hollywood.

The first full-fledged CBA came in 2001, when a large coalition of community groups negotiated a far-reaching agreement with the developer of the Staples Center for the Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment District. This was followed by four more CBAs on projects across Los Angeles. A dozen additional projects in Los Angeles have community benefits provisions incorporated into their respective development agreements.

Many communities across the country are now using the community benefits model. In San Jose, two projects have incorporated community benefits provisions into the development agreements, while groups in at least six cities-- Denver, Seattle, Milwaukee, Miami, New York and New Haven—are actively pursuing community benefits agreements.

Community Benefit Agreements in Los Angeles

Hollywood and Highland Project

Former City Councilmember Jackie Goldberg led the ground-breaking effort to win job quality guarantees in exchange for taxpayer subsidies on this high-profile development in the heart of Hollywood. Provisions include:

- 1,000 living wage jobs
- Card check neutrality for hotel
- Responsible contractor protections for janitors
- Local hiring program
- \$100,000 for on-site job training
- \$12 million over 20 years for community benefits including health care

Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment District Project

A coalition of 25 community groups and 5 unions led by the Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice negotiated an agreement for the 4 million square foot Staples Center expansion, which will include hotels, retail stores, restaurants and housing. Provisions include:

- Card check neutrality
- 70% living wage jobs
- First source hiring program
- Affordable housing
- \$1 million for parks

North Hollywood Mixed-Use Redevelopment Project

For two years, community leaders in the San Fernando Valley worked to secure an agreement for the 22-acre NoHo Commons project, a housing, office and retail development located in the North Hollywood CRA project area. Provisions include:

- Card check neutrality
- 75% living wage jobs
- First source hiring program
- Job training program
- Affordable childcare center

SunQuest Industrial Park Project

Community leaders in the North East Valley negotiated an agreement for this 33-acre light industrial project located in an underserved neighborhood. Council Member Alex Padilla initiated the community process. Provisions include:

- Employer neutrality
- 70% living wage jobs
- First source hiring program
- Youth center
- Neighborhood improvement fund
- Environmental mitigation

Marlton Square Redevelopment Project

A coalition of community groups and unions joined together with the Crenshaw Community Advisory Committee to negotiate a Community Benefits Agreement for this large retail and housing development in South Los Angeles.

- 70% living wage jobs
- First source hiring program
- Responsible contractor protections for janitors

Hollywood and Vine

LAANE worked with the hotel workers union, community groups and affordable housing advocates to win a community benefits agreement for this enormous development project in the heart of Hollywood. The agreement includes the following provisions:

- Hundreds of living wage jobs with health benefits
- More than 50 units of affordable housing
- \$100,000 for job training
- \$30,000 for a health care outreach worker
- Local hiring for the entire project