

The logo for Community Groundwork is displayed in a bright yellow, rounded rectangular frame with a double-line border. The text 'community' is in a lowercase, rounded font with a registered trademark symbol, and 'groundwork' is in a similar lowercase font below it.

community[®] groundwork

A faint, blue-tinted background image of a diverse group of people, including students and professionals, standing together.

MISSION

TO PREPARE COMMUNITY
COLLEGE STUDENTS FOR CIVIC
DUTY IN THEIR PERSONAL AND
PROFESSIONAL LIVES

INVESTING IN YOUNG PEOPLE

Community colleges attract hard-working, determined individuals who embody quintessential American values, yet they often experience additional challenges not faced by students at traditional four-year universities. Filling a work shift, finding childcare, or just figuring out how to get a foot in the door has kept too many people from succeeding in school and advancing professionally.

Community Groundwork is here to change that. For us, it's more than a moral issue; it's an investment in our future. It's a chance to support a new generation of strong leaders, empowering young people to choose truth over lies, hope over cynicism, and empathy over apathy.

It's about lending a hand to those with the potential but maybe not the resources. We have a responsibility to lift up young people and help bridge the cultural and socioeconomic gaps between everyday people and those in power. As a community college graduate, himself, founder Michael Ceraso is acutely aware that the problem lies in access and opportunity, not in talent or interest. That's why he founded Community Groundwork.

LEARN, LINK, LIFT
is a comprehensive system of workshops, mentoring and professional development.

Your investment allows students who cannot forgo paid work to gain experience that is otherwise only available to affluent students.



Our three-part program (LEARN, LINK, LIFT) focuses on government and journalism, two sides of the same civics coin. Working to demystify the professional world for our students, our curriculum addresses real-life needs that ensure being a citizen is not only the most important job, but, in the words of President Barack Obama, it's also one we can all afford.

THE OPPORTUNITY

HOW DO WE DIVERSIFY DEMOCRATIC LIFE?

Many political consultants have never worked with community college students on electoral campaigns. In interviews, some admitted they never even considered recruiting volunteers or staff from two-year institutions. The world of journalism can be just as difficult to get that first big break. Top internships routinely go to students at traditional universities, and only the most affluent can afford to take entry-level newsroom positions with low pay and brutal hours.

At CG, we know community college students are passionate, idealistic and come from the local community. They have the potential to run organizing efforts, door-to-door canvassing and local digital campaigns. They have the drive to break big stories in their communities and hold power to account. Unfortunately for most, their schools lack the resources afforded to four-year students. With our support though, these students can become future leaders and help change the world.

Community Groundwork diversifies the democratic landscape and expands the socio-economic spectrum for recruitment. CG students interested in politics and journalism have a chance to develop professional skills in a 20-hour training session taught by industry experts. These students develop their professional network and can enter their respective fields immediately after attending CG.

CG LEARNS

CG LEARNS is a 10-hour workshop over 2 days. Topics include storytelling, writing, fundraising, organizing and data analysis.

CG LINKS

CG LINKS is a mentorship program that pairs students with industry professionals who offer advice, serve as role models and open up their networks.

CG LIFTS

CG LIFTS provides students with a paid opportunity to shadow a candidate, local council member, journalist or community activist.

LEADERSHIP



Michael Ceraso

**Co-founder, executive director & board president,
Community Groundwork**

Michael works with underfunded candidates to get them the resources to organize and turn local enthusiasm into Election Day wins. Michael, a former state director for several presidential campaigns, has also served as director of communications, data management and campaign manager for local, state and federal races.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



John Hill | Founding partner, Deinde Group

A Dallas native, John returned home to become a public school teacher in Dallas ISD. He has been a key adviser in over 20 successful campaign operations at various levels and has worked closely with local organizations to support candidates seeking office. John received his bachelor's degree in government from Harvard University and his master's in education policy and leadership from Southern Methodist University.



Jed Leano | City council member, Claremont, CA

Jed, who is serving his second term on the Claremont City Council, works as an immigration attorney in private practice in Pasadena, CA. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky in 2001, his Juris Doctor from Rutgers Law School in 2005, and was named Democrat of the Year in October 2019 for the 41st Assembly District by the LA County Democratic Party. Jed and his wife, Liz, have one son, Welles.



Linda Serrato | New Mexico state representative

State Rep. Linda Serrato has served New Mexico since 2020 and has brought multiple Community Groundworks graduates into her campaign as interns. Rep. Serrato serves the southside of Santa Fe and is the vice chair of the House Commerce and Economic Development Committee. She has more than 15 years' experience on campaigns, in government and with advocacy and nonprofit organizations.



Alan Smith | Manager of community leadership, Consumer Reports

Alan builds consumer power by distributing leadership and investing in educators, organizers, storytellers and testers. He was the Associate Director of Networked Initiatives at the Roosevelt Institute and a producer on WNYC's Peabody award-winning Brian Lehrer Show. Alan graduated from Swarthmore College with bachelor's degrees in English and African history. He earned his master's in nonprofit leadership from the University of Pennsylvania.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Pablo Ordóñez Bravo | Growth product manager, Salesforce

Pablo is a tech strategist and business operator with broad experience across the public and private sectors. Pablo currently acts as a growth product manager at Salesforce. He is also a former management consultant who advised Fortune 500 companies on planning, executing and delivering scaled business transformation across levels and functions.



Linh Nguyen | Executive director, RUN AAPI

Linh has extensive experience specializing in electoral strategy and outreach to young people and communities of color. She's traveled the country working for candidates up and down the ballot, from presidential campaigns to city council. Linh's also made the jump into social impact work in the cannabis industry, freelancing for a creative agency, Black Flower. She is currently the executive director of RUN AAPI, an organization focused on building political and cultural power for young Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.



Chris Taylor | Founding principal, CIVIL

Chris builds consensus campaigns. He has assisted clients in campaigns to end oil drilling in LA neighborhoods, build consensus around public health priorities in the Mountain West, advocate for the release of a wrongfully convicted man on Oklahoma's death row, and launch a historic 1.3-mile outdoor Black art museum in LA's Crenshaw District. Chris earned his bachelor's degree in public relations at Ball State University and is a proud member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

OUR FUTURE

Since 2021, CG has trained dozens of Southern California community college students, and recently launched additional programming focusing on careers in the news industry.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



We've trained 65 students from Citrus College and Mt. San Antonio College since launch, with 80% identifying as non-white and 60% as women. In 2026, we'll continue to host trainings at Pitzer College, place students with mentors and provide job training opportunities with a focus on Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties.

CIVICS IN THE SUMMER

Every June, our long-running CG LEARNS civics workshop continues to prepare and empower young people eager to pursue careers in politics, government, law and similar fields. You can meet some of our amazing graduates at communitygroundwork.com/students.



JOURNALISM IN THE WINTER

Our inaugural Journalism School, held Dec. 13-14, 2025, marked CG's first foray into journalism programming and is now slated to be an annual event every December with workshop co-organizer and veteran journalist, Olsen Ebright, working to improve the curriculum. Our incredible students, ages 19-61, spent two days working alongside news veterans to develop key skills, including newswriting, ethics, SEO, social media, video editing, visual storytelling and more. You can watch their producing work at communitygroundwork.com/students.



STUDENT VOICES

My long term goal is to attend law school and work in the respective field, so the world of politics is immensely valuable to me. My genuine interest stems from the fact that so many of our laws, and even some of the freedoms we have today, are due to organized groups of people that share the same desire for change.

— Charlize Avila,
Mt. San Antonio College



Journalism provides crucial information that keeps the public informed, safe, and engaged. Making a difference within communities is something that drives me. It's encouraging to know that journalism is a path for me to become a voice for communities that don't have one.

— Mariana Andrade,
Mt. San Antonio College

When I was younger, history was always my favorite subject in school, as it opened up the doors to see the change that has happened over centuries of human existence. I hope to be able to be a part of this next wave of positive change in society by getting my degree in political science and getting active in my community.

— Trinity Jungers,
Citrus College



I am interested in working in politics because the communities I come from, like the Indigenous, LGBTQIA+, and neurodivergent communities, deserve representation. We are currently in a queer civil rights movement, and we need all hands on deck. The indigenous community has been under assault since 1492, on their own land. I owe it to my ancestors to do everything in my power to protect my people.

— César Tlatoāni Alvarado,
Mt. San Antonio College

HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

These goals are only attainable with your support. CG appreciates your past and future support.

\$100,000 FOR THE FUTURE

Community Groundwork aims to secure \$100,000 in donations to help power our programming for 2026. This annual investment will help dozens of students and support their journey to become policy makers, journalists and influencers. It allows us to cover student aid, trainers, venues, job shadowing, administration and more.

DONATE NOW AT
COMMUNITYGROUNDWORK.COM