2020 Year in Review

The global pandemic has tested the very fabric of our social and civic structures. Governments’ most essential services — healthcare, housing, education, employment — have been stretched to capacity. At the same time, a national reckoning of racial injustices has further illuminated long-standing systemic inequities.

Throughout the crisis, FUSE Executive Fellows have been vital leaders in their communities, enabling hospitals to manage surges in patients, keeping food on the table for older adults, finding shelter for people on the brink of homelessness, and supporting small businesses so they can continue to pay their employees.

This year has underscored so many of the factors that guide our work: Operating at the local level to account for the specific pandemic-related experiences of each city and county; engaging the community to ensure their perspectives are incorporated; focusing on equity, especially in communities of color, which are disproportionately impacted; building cross-sector partnerships; and getting the right leader, in the right role, at the right time to effect meaningful, lasting change.
Stories from the Field

A Lifeline to Small Business Owners

Small businesses servicing communities whose needs have not historically been well met have taken the brunt of the economic crisis brought on by the pandemic. As of April 2020, 41 percent of Black-owned businesses and 32 percent of Latinx-owned businesses in the U.S. had closed permanently. To help small businesses in Oakland — most of them minority-owned — stay afloat during the pandemic, FUSE helped their owners get access to emergency resources, while also helping the city identify partners that can assist with reopening, rebuilding, and recovery.

Housing for People on the Brink of Homelessness

As unemployed Americans struggle to pay rent across the country, the pandemic has intensified the affordable housing and homelessness crises. At the end of 2020, 35 percent of U.S. households were likely to face eviction or foreclosure in the next two months, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau. In Stockton, FUSE supported the city in securing a $4.3 million grant from California's Project Homekey program, which provides funds for cities to create permanent supportive housing from buildings such as motels and hotels for people struggling to make ends meet.

Creating Space for Critically Ill Hospital Patients

As surges of Covid-19 patients flood Los Angeles County hospitals, which treat more than 600,000 people annually, most of whom are dependent on Medicare, the Department of Health Services has been pivotal in helping hospitals respond. During the recent surge in cases, hospitalizations due to Covid-19 increased more than 300 percent from November 12 to December 11 in L.A. County. FUSE helped streamline operations for its recently launched Transfer Center, which not only resulted in improved care and lower costs, but also helped with transferring non-Covid-19 patients to dedicated facilities to free up capacity at acute-care hospitals.
Sharing Emerging Solutions to Urgent Needs

As communities searched for new solutions to an unprecedented crisis, FUSE convened online roundtables that featured national experts and local leaders, creating a place for practitioners to share strategies and solutions. The interest and response from civic partners, who were seeking a way to learn from one another, show how invaluable these sessions proved to be.

**Public Services Aid for Frontline Essential Workers**

Essential workers have been put at great risk during the pandemic. Between 40 and 60 percent of Los Angeles County’s essential workers are immigrants. They provide nursing, childcare, sanitation services, food production, and construction labor. Latinx workers in the county, for example, are five times more likely to be infected by Covid than white workers. FUSE helped the county pass the Immigrant Essential Workers Initiative to ensure that immigrant communities are provided the critical services they need, such as healthcare and hardship grants.

**Delivering Food to Isolated Seniors**

Providing food to older adults who have been sheltering in place for the duration of the pandemic has been an imperative, especially for those who live below the poverty line and have no family nearby. In Los Angeles, FUSE helped the county set up and launch The Great Plates Delivered Program, a state initiative that distributes meals from local restaurants to low-income, immune-compromised older adults who are unable to get access to food. So far, nearly 3 million meals have been delivered to 8,800 people in need.

**Offering a Bridge to Higher Education**

Surges of the Covid-19 pandemic have forced nationwide school closures, and with them access to help in applying for financial aid to pursue college. In Oakland, FUSE helped the city pass a policy that allows schools and districts to apply for an extension for the state financial aid application during times of crisis, which has proved to be crucial during the pandemic. FUSE also trained and educated counselors, advisors, students, and families on key resources that support preparing and applying for postsecondary school and federal financial aid.

700+ Attendees to FUSE roundtables

129 Government agencies represented

60,000+ People read and shared articles about FUSE projects
Our Impact

In 2020, **56 FUSE Executive Fellows** supported **91 government partners** in 18 cities and counties across the country and provided more than **75,000 hours of public service leadership**.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Impact</th>
<th>Culture of Innovation</th>
<th>Building Capacity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>486</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>4,996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy recommendations</td>
<td>Pilot programs created</td>
<td>Hours of government staff training</td>
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<tr>
<td>147</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1,151</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategies implemented</td>
<td>Collaborations between cities and counties</td>
<td>Civic leaders trained</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.5 M</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population served</td>
<td>Cities and counties that adopted FUSE-created tools</td>
<td>Organizations engaged in partnership</td>
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