



Sheila de la Guerra

# Public Comment

**From:** Patricia Solorio <psolorio@fundforsantabarbara.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 13, 2026 5:21 PM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Cc:** Eder Gaona Macedo  
**Subject:** Public comment for budget hearing- Community Services

**Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.**

Hello,

Please accept my written comment. I attended the hearing in person but was not able to stay for the agenda item. I am submitting a written comment for Community Services regarding the Racial Equity Grant.

Chair Nelson, supervisors, and staff,

My name is Patricia Solorio, Deputy Director of The Fund for Santa Barbara. On behalf of The Fund’s Board, Staff, Grant Making Committee, and grantees, I’d like to thank you for the partnership we have had over the last six years and the trust you and the community have placed in The Fund to steward the Racial Equity Grant. I also want to acknowledge the hard work the staff has put into the budget. That said, I’m here today to urge you to preserve the Racial Equity Grant program and to keep it administered through The Fund.

REG was created because Black community leaders demanded direct investment in communities facing systemic inequities after the murder of George Floyd. In 2020 the County declared racism a public health crisis and committed \$500,000 annually to begin repairing those harms. That commitment is not fulfilled in six years —it requires sustained, material support for organizations doing this work on the ground.

The Fund’s community-led, participatory grantmaking model — driven by a Grant Making Committee of people with lived experience and deep local relationships — ensures funds reach organizations embedded in the work and addressing root causes. That model cannot be replicated inside County bureaucracy. A County-run approach would add layers of delay, reduce access for grassroots groups, and increase administrative costs. The Fund operates with roughly 15% overhead; typical County administration runs near 35%. That difference is real dollars diverted away from community programs.

REG is a targeted response to persistent funding inequities. Nationally, organizations serving communities of color receive only a fraction of available funding. Locally, REG turns a modest County investment — currently about \$275,000 annually — into an outsized impact: supporting 37 organizations to date, reaching thousands of residents, students, emerging leaders, and community events across the County. Demand remains high — nearly \$6 million requested to date, with only one in five dollars funded.

I also want to demonstrate The Fund for Santa Barbara’s commitment to community. In the face of national rollbacks on racial equity and DEI initiatives, The Fund is stepping forward. **We commit to match the County’s \$275,000 investment dollar-for-dollar, doubling the total investment to \$550,000.** This is an opportunity to expand impact, not reduce it—ensuring our grantees have the resources to continue addressing racial injustices in our community.

Thank you for your leadership. I urge you to accept our match and stand by the County's promise to communities of color.

--



**Patricia Solorio** (she/her/ella)

**Associate Director**

**Office:** 805.922.1707

[Website](#) • [Donate Now!](#) • [Join our Mailing List](#) • [Community Calendar](#)