

John Kim, Managing Co-Director



Since 1997, John has fought to uplift the voices of marginalized communities throughout California. By building new tools, coalitions, and institutional capacity, his commitment is to ensure that the experience of low-income people and communities of color can no longer be ignored.

John started his community-building work as an activist, youth organizer and cultural artist in the Bay Area. In 1999, he became the Executive Director of the Korean Community Center of the East Bay where he was instrumental in launching new programs in the areas of domestic abuse, community development and community technology.

John first joined Advancement Project in 2002 to launch Healthy City and became a Co-Director for the California Office in 2008. Over the years, John has developed advocacy and research initiatives on issues ranging from community health, redistricting, community engagement, education, and public finance. Many of these initiatives, under his direction, have resulted in the reallocation of tens of millions of public and private dollars to the most underserved neighborhoods and have made the needs of marginalized communities a priority. John also has a long track record as a coalition-builder and facilitator, and has established a wide-range of partnerships with foundations, community based organizations, and governmental agencies across the state. As Co-Director of Advancement Project, John has been the driving force in expanding the California office's organizational development, staffing, fundraising efforts, and budget.

His work in the Bay Area was recognized by KQED Channel 9 as the 2001 Local Hero of the Year Award and by then-Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown with the proclamation of a "John K. Kim Day". In 2011 he accepted the Unsung Heroes Award from the California Community Foundation, given for "outstanding excellence in community engagement." He concluded a term as a member of the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners for the City of Los Angeles in 2011. And in 2011-12, he completed the prestigious Rockwood national year-long fellowship.

Born in Los Angeles, John currently lives in Highland Park with his wife, Jung Hee Choi, and their two children, Naiya and Ellis. In his free time, John enjoys growing his own vegetables, traveling/hiking with the family, and playing guitar.