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**LOS ANGELES WORLD CUP 2026 HOST COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES LEGACY PROGRAM TO CELEBRATE
26 COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS – GRANT PORTAL OPENS TODAY**

Leading up to 2026, the Host Committee will support community soccer programs, youth wellness, workforce development, and neighborhood beautification initiatives that will have a lasting impact on the LA region.

LOS ANGELES (April 7, 2025) – As Los Angeles prepares to host the U.S. opening match for FIFA World Cup 26™, the Los Angeles World Cup 2026 Host Committee is proud to unveil a series of legacy programs in partnership with the Play Equity Fund, designed to use the power of the World’s Game to create lasting, meaningful impact across the Los Angeles region.

Under the theme “Celebrate the Extraordinary,” these initiatives will elevate and engage Angelenos by growing the game of soccer, inspiring future sports professionals, beautifying neighborhoods, and showcasing nonprofit organizations that are using soccer to uplift communities and foster connection, opportunity, and unity across the region.

The first of these initiatives, the 26 Champions Grant Program, will recognize 26 local nonprofits that are already making a transformative impact in underserved neighborhoods and communities facing challenges, including those recovering from the recent LA wildfires. In partnership with the Play Equity Fund, the Host Committee will award 26 grants to incredible organizations using soccer to empower and uplift their communities.

**THE APPLICATION FOR THIS PROGRAM OPENED TODAY
WITH A DEADLINE OF APRIL 23, 2025**

“The Los Angeles World Cup 2026 Host Committee is committed to ensuring FIFA World Cup 26™ leaves a positive community impact across our region,” said **Kathryn Schloessman, President & CEO of the Los Angeles Sports & Entertainment Commission and Los Angeles World Cup 2026 Host City Manager**. “Hosting eight FIFA World Cup matches is an incredible opportunity to shine a global spotlight on the local champions and organizations that are improving the lives of our residents every day. These transformative programs are made possible thanks to the unwavering support of our Host City supporters, ChampionLA donors and the Play Equity Fund.”

The Los Angeles World Cup 2026 Host Committee and the Play Equity Fund will honor each selected organization with a \$26,000 grant award, a professionally produced marketing video showcasing the organization, and public recognition of their work in the lead up to FIFA World Cup 26™.

Only 501(c)(3) public charities or government entities, not individuals, based in Los Angeles County are eligible to receive the grant. These organizations must be using soccer to bring communities together, address physical, social, and emotional health challenges, or support the region's rebuilding efforts by using the game to create connections, joy, and recovery.

"The Los Angeles World Cup 2026 Host Committee, the Play Equity Fund, and our partners at the Los Angeles Sports & Entertainment Commission have created World Cup legacy programs that exemplify the positive impact a major sporting event can have on communities and residents of all ages," said **Renata Simril, President of the Play Equity Fund and President & CEO of the LA84 Foundation**. "Through the power of the World's Game, these initiatives will bring attention to outstanding local organizations, empower our communities with new resources, and make a vital impact on grassroots soccer for generations."

The selected 26 Champions will be revealed in June as part of a one-year-to-go celebration. The application deadline is April 23, 2025. To apply or learn more about the Los Angeles World Cup 2026 Host Committee grant program, please visit losangelesfwc26.com/legacy.

Details about regional beautification days, professional development programs, Business Connect, and the Grow the Game Soccer Clinics will be shared in the coming months. For more information on the Los Angeles World Cup 2026 Host Committee's legacy programs and how you can get involved, please visit losangelesfwc26.com.

About the Los Angeles World Cup 2026 Host Committee

The Los Angeles World Cup Host Committee was established to deliver a premier FIFA World Cup 26™ experience and drive lasting social, cultural, and economic impact for the region. We serve as the liaison between FIFA and the Los Angeles region to harness opportunities surrounding the tournament to elevate our community. The Host Committee is co-chaired by LAFC Co-President Larry Freedman and former U.S. Men's National Team player Chris Klein, and is led by the Los Angeles Sports & Entertainment Commission (LASEC). It also includes the Los Angeles Rams, SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park, Los Angeles Football Club (LAFC), and LA Galaxy. For more information, visit losangelesfwc26.com.

About the Play Equity Fund

The Play Equity Fund was established by the LA84 Foundation as a 501(c)(3) public charity, and it removes barriers to ensure all children have access to the transformative power of sport and play. The Play Equity Fund supports the sports-based youth development ecosystem for greater impact, raises awareness of inequities and develops partnerships to advocate for sustainable solutions to ensure all children have pathways through sport for lifelong well-being. Visit playequityfund.org and follow @playequityfund.

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