

## Christine Essel

President and Chief Executive Officer  
Southern California Grantmakers  
@Christine\_Essel



Christine Essel is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Southern California Grantmakers (SCG), a regional association of philanthropic leaders whose mission is to support and advance effective, responsible philanthropy for the public good. SCG's members include family, community, private, corporate and public foundations, as well as individual grantmakers. As president, Ms. Essel sets the strategic direction and priorities for the organization, overseeing programming, communications, member services and public policy.

She joined SCG as President and CEO on February 1, 2013.

Prior to joining SCG, Ms. Essel held leadership roles in the government, corporate, philanthropic and nonprofit sectors, where she has shaped legislation and public and corporate policy. Ms. Essel brings a wealth of experience to SCG including a deep knowledge of the region and a passion for forging creative solutions to complex community challenges, along with extensive relationships and expertise in corporate philanthropy, finance, real estate development, government and community relations. For over three decades, Ms. Essel worked at Paramount Pictures, serving for many years as Senior Vice President, Government and Community Affairs, a department she built from the ground up. In that role, she was responsible for the studio's philanthropic efforts and for shaping Paramount's civic presence while managing all political and legislative activity, corporate social responsibility and fundraising activities. During her tenure she was also responsible for overseeing in excess of \$500 million in real estate development projects on the studio lot.

Most recently, she served as CEO for the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles (CRA/LA), with an annual budget exceeding \$600 million, a staff of 260 employees and 32 project areas throughout the City of Los Angeles. In response to a statewide call by the legislature, Ms. Essel's leadership helped lay a critical foundation for the dissolution of the agency, leading to a successful redistribution of resources for schools and local governments, while ensuring the completion of many crucial affordable housing projects and other developments vitally important to the economic growth of the region.

Ms. Essel has been named to numerous Boards and Commissions over the years, serving as chair of the California Film Commission, the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency, the Hollywood Community Advisory Council, Alternative Living for the Aging and Central City Association. She also served as Vice-Chair of the California Workforce Investment Board and FilmLA and was a member of the powerful Los Angeles World Airports Commission, Grand Avenue Project Joint Powers Authority and Los Angeles Development Fund. Ms. Essel has been honored by esteemed organizations such as City of Hope, National Women's Political Committee, Alternative Living for the Aging, Weingart Center Partners, Central City Association, and the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce. In 2016, she received the Leader of the Year Award from the Southern California Leadership Network. She has been named to the Non-Profit Times "Power and Influence Top 50" for the past two years (2016 and 2017).