**Commitment to California Initiative**

Merritt is thrilled to announce the launch of our new initiative, Commitment to California! Over the next 3 years, Merritt will strengthen the future of affordable housing with $2.5 million to educate, train, and support over 800 professionals via scholarships, internships, career development and innovative engagement.

As a mission-based nonprofit, Merritt strives to improve the affordable housing industry by working to address equity, diversity, and inclusion with other partnered, like-minded organizations.

We’re going beyond the role as California’s affordable housing funder and looking to support the next generation of affordable housing leaders.

The Commitment to California initiative is Merritt’s approach to strengthen California’s affordable housing industry with a focus on diversity, inclusion, and equity by introducing people to the industry, strengthening, and supporting those already in the industry, and growing the next generation of leaders.

We are focusing on three areas as part of our Commitment to California initiative:

Merritt Scholars, a program that provides tangible knowledge of the industry for undergraduate students and creates an entry point for a career in affordable housing. This program includes a $10,000 scholarship and a meaningful opportunity to learn more about the affordable housing field via access to a mentor, fully paid attendance at local and statewide industry conferences, and engagement with industry leaders. At the conclusion for the program, Merritt may assist scholars in obtaining their first job in the affordable housing industry. This program will be growing and expanding to host 4x as many scholars as previous cohorts.

Housing Development Training Institute, a one-of-a-kind training program for project managers at non-profit affordable developers. We are partnering with LISC by contributing $750,000 over the next three years to grow the program to three times as many participants to engage with this training and become leaders in the industry. “Merritt strongly believes that HDTI is the most consequential program in California for affordable housing development,” states Ari Beliak, Merritt’s CEO and President.  “As we invest in the future of California’s affordable housing through our Commitment to California initiative, we are excited to partner with LISC to grow the HDTI program, training more effective leaders in the industry.”

Statewide professional development programs engage people already interested or involved in the affordable housing industry, and to work toward diversity and inclusion in affordable housing. Merritt is partnering with Housing CA, Non-Profit Housing Association, CCRH, SCANPH, and San Diego Housing Federation to provide financial support for internships, career development programs, and industry conferences. Over 400 individuals will be impacted by these initiatives.

Merritt strongly believes in investing in California’s future and strengthening the next generation and we are excited to work with other like-minded organizations. Through the Merritt’s Commitment to California the future of the state’s affordable housing industry will be more equitable and diverse, which will have positive impacts for all of California.

**Commitment to California**: [www.merrittcap.org/commitment-to-california/](https://merrittcap.org/commitment-to-california-initiative-launched/www.merrittcap.org/commitment-to-california/)