



Instituto Laboral de la Raza

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About Us

For over 27 years, the Instituto Laboral de la Raza has served low income families of California as a nonprofit advocacy and workers' resource center. Headquartered in the Mission District of San Francisco, with a field office in San Jose, the Instituto provides legal services, peer counseling, financial education and access to a network of services to the unorganized working poor. Most of our clients are unorganized working poor immigrants from Mexico, Central America and South America.

The Mission of the Instituto Laboral de la Raza is to enable the working poor to emerge from cycles of poverty that endanger themselves and the families they support. The Goal of the Instituto Laboral de la Raza is to attack the root causes of systemic poverty of people from all social and ethnic backgrounds through programs that stabilize them in their communities, and to build leadership skills so that they may flourish and contribute in harmony to the economic, social and cultural enrichment of their communities.

The Instituto provides labor rights education and legal advocacy to obtain unpaid wages and their denied benefits. We work in collaboration with other neighborhood organizations to effectively manage all other critical needs for the economic, health and social welfare of these disadvantaged, disparaged families. We also have an ongoing program to produce bi-lingual financial educational workshops for adults focused on basic money management, banking and financial services.

Founded in 1982 by Jose E. Medina and community labor leaders, the Instituto, through its community unionism program, also provides workers with information to assist them to seek employment opportunities through union hiring halls as well as to provide them the means to organize in their workplaces. The Instituto Laboral de la Raza has both community activists and labor leaders that sit on our Board of Directors. Our Advisory Board includes men and women from Organized Labor, from the legal and religious community, as well as grassroots activists.

The Instituto hosts an annual fundraising National Labor Community Awards Summit which is the largest event of its kind in the county. We also host an annual Green Labor-Capital Forum to promote using the power of labor's capital for growing green jobs and a sustainable economy. We use digital video and web technology to document these events, expand our reach and tell the stories of our clients, our supporters and the work we do.

Instituto Laboral de la Raza is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. We do not charge for any of our services. We are funded by donations, grants and sponsorship by unions and select businesses. Donations are tax deductible in accordance with section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.