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## **CIELO Fund at IECF Announces \$125k in Scholarships for Inland Empire Latino Students**

RIVERSIDE, CA – The Inland Empire Community Foundation (IECF) announced today that the Cultivating Inland Empire Latino Opportunity, or CIELO Fund, is awarding \$125,000 in scholarships to 83 Latino students throughout the Inland Empire as part of the inaugural CIELO Fund Scholars Program. Funding for the inaugural round of CIELO Fund Scholars was made possible thanks to generous support from the S.L. Gimbel Foundation and SoCal Gas' ¡GENTE! Latino Employee Committee.

“We can’t go wrong investing in our next generation of college students,” **said Jesse Melgar, IECF Board Member and CIELO Fund Founding Chair.** “Our research last year showed that only 1 in 10 Inland Empire Latinos have a bachelor’s degree or higher so our committee wanted to do our part to support students breaking barriers for their families, for their communities, and for our region. We thank the S.L. Gimbel Foundation and SoCal Gas for their generous support, and wish our inaugural round of CIELO Fund Scholars the best in their educational pursuits, including the overwhelming majority who are on track to become the first in their families to graduate from college.”

The CIELO Fund Leadership and Grantmaking Committee is proud to invest in the next generation of local leaders with the launch of the inaugural CIELO Fund Scholars Program to provide support to Latino students attending Inland Empire colleges and universities, especially those intending to remain and work in the region upon completing their studies.

Launched in 2022 as an IECF signature fund with a mission of uplifting and investing in the region’s Latino community, the CIELO Fund [awarded \\$280,000 in grants](#) to 25 Latino led and Latino serving organizations throughout Riverside and San Bernardino counties earlier this year

and released its inaugural report *Aqui Estamos: A Data Profile on Latinos in the Inland Empire* that outlines many of the Latino community's needs in the region.

CIELO Fund Scholarship recipients attend or will attend the following regional colleges and universities this Fall, including:

- University of California, Riverside
- California State University, Riverside
- Riverside City College
- San Bernardino Valley College
- College of the Desert
- Crafton Hills College
- California Baptist University

The CIELO Fund Scholars Program aims to provide financial assistance in the form of scholarships to graduating high school students and current college students who are Latino. This scholarship looks to support civic-minded students who want to give back to the region and who demonstrate motivation, perseverance and a sincere desire to put their education to work for the benefit of the Inland Empire and underserved communities. Recipients may receive a one-time scholarship award of \$1,000 to \$2,000 to an accredited four-year public, two year community college or private institution of higher learning within the Inland Empire. Priority will be given to those students who intend to work in the region upon graduation. The scholarship awards are outright grant awards. No services will be required as a consequence of receiving the award. Scholarship awards are for tuition, books, education fees, and/or living expenses. All students were welcome to apply, regardless of immigration status.

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*Founded in 1941, the Inland Empire Community Foundation is the oldest and largest community foundation in Inland Southern California. We partner with individuals, families and corporations to build a culture of philanthropy. Since inception, we have given out over \$159 million in grants and scholarships. For more information visit the IECF's website at [www.iegives.org](http://www.iegives.org). Be a part of our conversation on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.*