



Few Latinos Leading Inland Empire Nonprofits: Briefing Tackles Lack of Diversity

Report Shows Latinos Acutely Underrepresented on Inland Empire Nonprofit Boards

Riverside, CA – Nonprofit organizations play a crucial role in the quality of life for Inland Empire families. Latinos, however, are rarely invited to serve as nonprofit board members, according to a study released today through a partnership of [The CIELO Fund at IECF](#) and [Latinos LEAD](#).

Even though Latinos make up 54% of the Inland Empire’s population, they occupy barely 13% of the board positions that govern 198 nonprofit organizations reviewed in the ground-breaking study. This and other findings were discussed today by the authors and sponsors of *“Inclusive Leadership: Examining Disparities in Nonprofit Leadership for Latinos in the Inland Empire”* during a briefing in Riverside today.

“The lack of Latinos on nonprofit boards is a missed opportunity for community leadership development, and contradictory to the essence of the nonprofit sector – to uplift and represent all members of our society,” said **Assemblymember Sabrina Cervantes (D-Riverside), Chair of the Latino Caucus in the California State Legislature**. “The *Boards Count!* findings underscore the urgency of this issue in the Inland Empire and the work needed to ensure Latinos, and every community, have a seat at these important decision-making tables.”

Patrick Salazar, Executive Director of Latinos LEAD, explained, “This report challenges nonprofit organizations to assess whether their board recruiting practices include their constituents at all levels.” Salazar added, “We don’t propose that nonprofit boards reflect proportionally the Inland Empire’s 54% Latino population, but I think we can all agree that having one Latino board member—or none at all—is simply unacceptable.”

Boards Count! provides a baseline for the objective measurement of Latino board representation of nearly 2,000 nonprofit organizations in 19 U.S. cities. Latinos LEAD will continue to examine this group to report on progress in nonprofit governance inclusion.

Jesse Melgar, Founder and Chair of The CIELO Fund which commissioned this report and Board Member at the Inland Empire Community Foundation, stressed the importance of collaboration and action. “We know that the latest projections show the Latino population growing to become 74% of the Inland Empire’s population by 2060. Our goal with this partnership is to improve Latino representation on our local nonprofit boards to align with that growth. The *Boards Count!* findings emphasize that our nonprofits must evolve to reflect the vibrant diversity of our population.”

“Diverse viewpoints help boards make better decisions, and reflect the voices they serve; it makes smart business sense to include Latino voices,” said **Michelle Decker, President & CEO of the Inland Empire Community Foundation**. “Our boards are where the rubber meets the road for making great

organizations. IECF proudly supports Latinos LEAD's work on improving board representation and governance practices."

Report Highlights:

- Latinos make up barely 13% of nonprofit board members in the Inland Empire
- More than 40% of Inland Empire nonprofits have no Latino board members
- There are no Latino board members on 67% of nonprofit with youth and children missions
- Health & Human Services (14%), Housing & Homelessness (18.3%), and Arts/Culture & Museums (8.7%) subsectors all have disproportionately low levels of Latino board representation

The report also recommends practical steps for recruiting Latino board members:

- Evaluate public-facing materials to ensure they resonate with potential Latino candidates
- Invite nominations from Latino professional member associations, elected and appointed public officials, and business leaders
- Seek strategic planning participation from Latino experts, leaders, and community members
- Consider engaging a board recruiting consultant to source qualified Latino candidates

The *Boards Count!* partnership honors the 2023 Hispanic Heritage Month theme: "*Latinos - Driving Prosperity, Power, and Progress in America.*"

The full report and more information about the "*Boards Count!*" project can be found at <https://latinosleadnow.org/boards-count/main-search/>

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About Latinos LEAD:

[Latinos LEAD](#) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 2017 to promote stronger civil society organizations. Through various initiatives, Latinos LEAD strives to prepare and recruit Latinos for nonprofit board leadership.

About The CIELO Fund at IECF:

The Cultivating Inland Empire Latino Opportunity Fund ([CIELO Fund](#)), founded by Jesse Melgar and housed within the Inland Empire Community Foundation, aims to uplift and invest in the Latino community of the Inland Empire. The fund supports initiatives, research, and organizations led by and serving Latinos in Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

About the Inland Empire Community Foundation:

Founded in 1941, the [Inland Empire Community Foundation](#) is the oldest and largest community foundation serving the Inland region. The foundation is committed to advancing equity and works collaboratively with various stakeholders to drive systemic changes that improve the lives of people in the Inland Empire.