THE CIELO FUND
Cultivating Inland Empire Latino Opportunity

What is the CIELO Fund?

“Cielo” means “sky” or “heaven” in Spanish. The name signals hope – sky’s the limit – and gives a nod to the aspirations, resilience, and dreams that define the Inland Empire’s Latino community.

The Cultivating Inland Empire Latino Opportunity (CIELO) Fund at IECF launched in 2022 at the Inland Empire Community Foundation. The CIELO Fund’s mission is to uplift and invest in organizations, initiatives and ideas that are led by – and serve – Latinos in the Inland Empire. Leading the effort is CIELO Fund founder, chair, and IECF Vice Chair, Jesse Melgar, who, along with regional Latino leaders who make up the Leadership and Grantmaking Committee, have raised more than $1 million to jumpstart the effort within its first year. Over 300 foundations, companies, colleges, universities, organizations, and individuals have supported the CIELO Fund directly.

The CIELO Fund is housed at the Inland Empire Community Foundation (IECF) and is dedicated to empowering the lives of Latinos in the Inland Empire by uplifting and investing in organizations, initiatives and ideas that are led by—and serve—Latinos in our region.

What are the benefits of the CIELO Fund?

• Support Latino led and serving nonprofit organizations doing impactful work throughout the Inland Empire
• Learn about issues impacting Latinos
• Network with other Latinos who are philanthropically minded and living their passion

Based on the funds raised, grants are made at least annually. Using “participatory grant making,” several donors (including the Chair) and several nonprofits work together with IECF’s Grants and Community Impact team to decide and distribute grant funding.

Funds will be disbursed based on the committee’s recommendations in one or both of the following ways:

• By open call, competitive application
• By invitation only

About two dozen organizations received grants that will provide a big boost for Latino communities in the Inland Empire. It’s made possible thanks to the CIELO Fund. There are roughly 2.3 million Latinos in the Inland Empire, making up over half of the population.

~ ABC 7 Los Angeles
Latinos are the largest ethnic group in the Inland Empire, but this growth isn’t reflected in targeted philanthropic investments in the community regionally. The Inland Empire Community Foundation is leading a strategy that specifically lifts up the Latino community.

“As the Latino community in the Inland Empire grows, so should investments in the people, organizations, and opportunities helping our community thrive. That’s why we created The CIELO Fund—a fund by us, for us, that uplifts our stories and experiences while centering local organizations serving those who need it most.”

JESSE MELGAR
CIELO Fund Founding Chairperson
IECF Vice Chair of the Board
Senior Advisor for Strategy & Public Affairs, UC Berkeley Possibility Lab

Founding CIELO Fund Leadership and Grant Committee

Sergio Bohon
Wells Fargo Advisor & IECF Board Member

Luz Gallegos
Executive Director, TODEC Legal Center, Inc.

Helen Iris Torres
Executive Director, Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE)

Tomás D. Morales
President, CSU San Bernardino

Silvia Paz
Executive Director, Alianza Coachella Valley

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Donations may be made directly to the CIELO Fund at: www.iegives.org/donate
For more information, contact Brie Griset Smith, SVP of Charitable Giving at bgrisetsmith@iegives.org or call 951.241.7777.