

California's CVIIC Celebrates 10th Anniversary and Successful Partnerships

The Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative (CVIIC) celebrated 10 years of successful partnerships to empower immigrant families

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, February 28, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In the Central Valley of California, a nonprofit agency has been proving over the past 10 years that organizations that work together can have a great and lasting social impact.

On February 26, 2024, the [Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative \(CVIIC\)](#), a nonprofit agency based in Fresno, California, celebrated its 10th anniversary. It is a landmark moment that demonstrates the success of the model of regional coordination and collaboration that

has guided CVIIC's work since its establishment in 2014. This has involved the creation of mutually beneficial working relationships with numerous agencies from the nonprofit, public, and private sectors. By working together, this dynamic network of partner agencies has achieved a notable social impact, creating successful precedents of local and regional collaboration.

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CVIIC traces its origins to 2013 when local agencies and community leaders sought to achieve two related objectives: 1) to empower immigrants by ensuring access to needed services and information; and 2) to strengthen what was then an inadequate regional organizational capacity to provide access to immigration legal services. To

maximize the impact of the limited resources that were available at the time, the local efforts



gave rise to a unique model of regional coordination and collaboration. It is a model that continues to function and has been applied to multiple campaigns.

The process began when a regional convening was held in Fresno in October 2013 to discuss regional policy priorities and objectives in the area of immigration, assess existing resources, and propose specific activities to carry out. One of the specific outcomes of this process was the development of a regional strategic plan that was completed in January 2014 and, subsequently, presented to partner organizations at a meeting that took place on February 26, 2014, simultaneously launching the birth of CVIIC.

Since then, CVIIC and partner agencies have addressed numerous issues of relevance to Central Valley immigrant families. This includes access to immigration legal services, the promotion of civic participation, community education on COVID-19 and other health topics, 2020 Census participation, immigrant entrepreneurship and economic mobility, promotion of local level immigrant inclusion policies, and engagement in local, regional, state, and national advocacy efforts.



CVIIC Board Members Receive Recognitions from California State Legislators, Senator Ana Caballero and Assemblymember Dr. Joaquin Arambula



CVIIC Staff Members Eleazar Valdez and Ricardo Suarez, Celebrate CVIIC's 10th Anniversary with Crystal Fernandez from West Coast Mennonite Central Committee

CVIIC board Treasurer and Fresno-based immigration attorney, Lazaro Salazar, highlighted the significance of the 10th anniversary:

"I have had the honor of being a board member of CVIIC since its inception. Through its leadership in coordinating events with local partners, including attorneys, CVIIC has held many events throughout the greater San Joaquin Valley providing assistance and guidance on such

topics as initial/renewal DACA applications, naturalization, and legal permanent residency, health, and entrepreneurship. While the immigration landscape is certain to change in the near future, CVIIC stands more than ready to continue their efforts in guiding our community through the challenges that may come.”

CVIIC board member, Maria Lemus, further underscored the importance of building partnerships as an essential characteristic of CVIIC’s model of operations:

“Congratulations to CVIIC on its 10-year anniversary! CVIIC has been at the forefront of issues impacting our immigrant communities in the Central Valley for a decade. It has become an organization that is trusted, builds partnerships and is always searching for ways to bring resources to communities. Thank you to the staff at CVIIC for building on that community trust and for working to ensure that people receive the help they seek. As a board member, I feel proud of the work and look forward to more years of movement building and service.”

A specific example of the success of the model of regional coordination and collaboration is that during the past decade, CVIIC and partner agencies have successfully scheduled hundreds of free immigration legal services workshops in rural and urban communities throughout a region that encompasses eight California counties (Fresno, Kern, Kings, Tulare, Madera, Merced, Stanislaus, San Joaquin). These events provide attorney consultations and application assistance for existing programs including naturalization, legal permanent residence renewal, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) renewal, U Visas, T Visas, VAWA, asylum, and change of status.

In 2023 alone, CVIIC staff led the organization of 44 such workshops, which served a total of 2,071 clients. The workshops were staffed by as many as 20 participating partner agencies, including Immigrant Legal Resource Center, Education and Leadership Foundation, Centro La Familia Advocacy Services, KIND, SIREN, CAIR, International Rescue Committee, Oasis Legal Services, and other nonprofit agencies and pro bono attorneys.

Another major program currently run by CVIIC is its Immigrant Entrepreneurship Program (IEP). While relatively new, the program has been expanding and serving a growing number of Latino immigrants due to the high demand that has been found for the opportunities that it provides and the creation of new forms of collaboration with agencies also interested in promoting immigrant entrepreneurship in the Central Valley.

The IEP was created in summer 2020, in large part out of a desire of CVIIC and partner agencies to enable immigrant families to develop self-employment and entrepreneurial capacity in light of the economic crisis brought about by the pandemic.

Since Fall 2020, CVIIC has offered free virtual entrepreneurship training opportunities to a total of seven separate cohorts of Latino [immigrant entrepreneurs](#). Combined, the seven cohorts have enrolled close to 400 participants. In addition, scores of industry-specific mini courses have

been offered since 2020, further serving hundreds of beneficiaries. In 2023, CVIIC worked with Santa Clara University's My Own Business Institute (MOBI), to promote its online entrepreneurial learning platform, which has already enrolled over 250 students. In 2024, CVIIC will add in-person courses to be held in Fresno and three rural communities.

In the 10th anniversary celebration, CVIIC Executive Director, Jesus Martinez, identified four factors that enable CVIIC to carry out its mission during the past decade: "1. A vast network of partner agencies committed to a model of regional coordination and collaboration; 2) a consistent and supportive leadership, such as that provided by the CVIIC board of directors; 3) the support of funders to make the work possible; 4) a team of qualified and dedicated employees.

Jesus Martinez

CVIIC

+1 559-666-6435

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