

Communication from Public

Name: Maegan Ortiz

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Comments for Public Posting: Hello, my name is Maegan Ortiz, I am the Executive Director for the Instituto de Educación Popular del Sur de California's Day Labor Program. IDEPSCA operates five of the seven day labor centers funded by the City of Los Angeles. Our Day Labor Centers provide workforce and leadership development through education, outreach, accompaniment and referrals. The centers also help day laborers defend their rights including support with wage recovery, wage claim processes, referrals for workers' compensation and retaliation, and health and safety violations. While Day Labor Centers have always served as community resource hubs, since the pandemic, this role has become more visible as day laborers and community members have used them to access free hot meals, pantry items, PPE and information about covid-19 health and safety protocols and policies. We are grateful to be included in the mayor's budget at current funding levels for Fiscal Year 22-23. IDEPSCA - like the City, its businesses, and organizations has been deeply impacted by the pandemic. 75 percent of staff became infected with COVID-19 at least once while keeping the centers open to provide essential services for essential workers. At the height of the pandemic centers were open for covid testing, vaccines, hot meals, groceries, and PPE along with culturally specific material for day laborers created in house. In order to serve this vulnerable population and to support existing and potential staff, we need the ability to hire specialists in wage claims and offer competitive salaries that account for the cost of living, inflation including higher food and rent. The Day Labor Program has leveraged outside funds from the State and philanthropy to offer increased pay to staff who have been exposing themselves to risk to serve day laborers in person. Across the 5 day labor centers we served almost 1,000 unduplicated workers (995). Overwhelmingly the workers who use our center identify as men. About half are renters or houseless and 70 percent of workers do not have health insurance. Workers were placed in over 10,000 jobs across all centers last Fiscal Year amounting to nearly \$900,000 in wages. However there were 21 wage theft cases, with about \$75,000 being stolen from workers. As the pandemic continues, we expect these trends to continue. Therefore we urge the budget and finance committee to continue their support of this critical program with an additional allocation

beyond what was given for this current fiscal year.