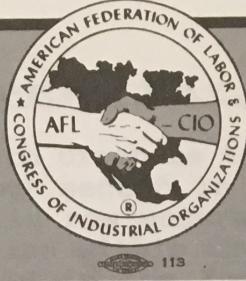


# AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS

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TO: All Unions and Councils

FROM: David Sickler, AFL-CIO Region VI Director  
Jose DePaz, CIWA Executive Director

RE: CALIFORNIA IMMIGRANT WORKERS ASSOCIATION (CIWA)

## CIWA'S BEGINNING

CIWA evolved from Labor's Immigrant Assistance Project launched in 1987 to assist union and non-union immigrant workers applying for amnesty and citizenship under the 1986 passage of the Immigrant Reform and Control Act (IRCA).

CIWA was formally launched in 1989 to provide a "holding tank" for the thousands of non-union immigrant workers going through the legalization process.

In total more than 15,000 immigrants have joined CIWA for a year's membership or longer. CIWA's staff provided assistance with wage and hour violations, school fraud, landlord abuse, immigration law, family unity, representation before the school board and city agencies including city hall, the Los Angeles City Council, Board of Supervisors and the California State Legislature.

CIWA members have assisted AFL-CIO unions with their rallies, strikes, picket lines and marches.

## CIWA'S MISSION TO ORGANIZE

Although CIWA began as an experiment in community based associate membership, CIWA's mission for the last two years have been focused on its successful and proven service in organizing and achieving first time contracts.

Today Los Angeles is the most dynamic source of union organizing activity and innovation in the country.

Los Angeles has over 785,000 workers employed in manufacturing. This makes Los Angeles the largest single manufacturing center in the United States and the second largest in the world. The overwhelming majority of these workers are Latino and immigrant workers.

## CIWA'S POTENTIAL

The potential here to organize thousands and thousands of workers in the manufacturing sector is obvious. A major study of the "Alameda Corridor" is now underway to determine the most logical targets and industries within that corridor. In November, 1994 a meeting will be held in Los Angeles to discuss the finding and recommendations of that study.

CIWA can and should play a major role in any coordinated organizing drive with immigrant workers.

CIWA has played a key role in several major organizing drives. The Carpenters, Machinists and HERE are among the local unions that utilized CIWA to win not just recognition, but first time contracts of surprising quality that cover more than 6,000 new private sector union members. In 1993 CIWA staff spent most of the year assisting affiliates with industry campaigns involving large bargaining units that are 90% or more minority or immigrant.

## SOME CIWA HIGHLIGHTS

### CARPENTERS RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION

CIWA's largest ongoing commitment is residential construction, where the carpenters and CIWA spent 1993 consolidating the victory of late 1992 that resulted in recognition by approximately 85% of the drywall industry. Fifteen thousand (15,000) additional workers remain to be organized in residential construction.

### MACHINISTS/WHEEL INDUSTRY

As a direct out-growth of the IAM's stunning NLRB election victory and the quality of the first time contract for the 1,200+ unit at American Racing Company, workers at several other wheel manufacturing plants have expressed interest in organizing.

### HERE/AIRPORT HOTEL CAMPAIGN

CIWA identified a lead at Nikko catering (180 workers) and is assisting HERE with the campaign,. CIWA is also assisting with the HERE Downtown Hotel campaign and the LAX campaign.

## ORGANIZING LEADS

In addition to the campaign described above, during 1993 CIWA identified, pursued and passed on to local unions scores of other organizing leads. Targeted lead identification and development will continue to be a focus of CIWA activity in 1994. In addition CIWA is leveraging its hard won credibility in the community and with other Latino and immigrant rights organizations to initiate know-your-job-rights meetings and referrals and literature distribution to identify workers with grievances in targeted

industries, CIWA is also expanding its outreach to local unions in terms of steward and local organizing training and immigration and employment rights legal issues.

### THE PROBLEM

Given CIWA's transition from an Associate Membership Program to an organizing support mechanism, the AFL-CIO is transferring CIWA to the Los Angeles, Orange Counties Organizing Committee. The problem is that there is no longer financing from the National AFL-CIO to fund CIWA. In order to keep CIWA alive for the remainder of 1994 we need an additional \$75,000.00 from the labor movement.

The annual cost of operating CIWA at its current status is about \$300,000.00. Obviously this cost is very high for one or two unions to fund. However the cost spread among many unions who have a great deal to gain from CIWA efforts could keep CIWA alive.

### THE FUTURE

To a great extent the rebuilding of America's labor movement could be in Los Angeles. Hundreds of thousands of immigrant, minority and women workers are unorganized. The several large and successful campaigns recently won in Los Angeles prove that it is only the tip of the iceberg.

Over four million (4,000,000) immigrant workers are in the pipeline to become permanent residents eligible to register and vote. CIWA is working with U. S. Citizenship Action Network to reach these 4,000,000 people to expose them to the labor movement.

Obviously these workers can and will change the political geography of our national's largest state.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

If the labor movement moves now and makes the necessary investment, we can reap the benefits. We are asking each union to make a generous contribution. If five unions gave \$15,000.00 apiece we could finance the remainder of 1994, or if fifteen unions gave only \$5,000.00 apiece we could accomplish the same goal.

We thank you for considering this proposal.

For further information please call David Sickler at (213) 387-1974 or Jose De Paz at (213) 738-8000.

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