

# CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE



**CENTRO**  
**LEGAL** DE LA  
RAZA





## MISSION

Founded in 1969, Centro Legal de la Raza is a legal services agency protecting and advancing the rights of low-income, immigrant, Black, and Latinx communities through bilingual legal representation, education, and advocacy. By combining quality legal services with know-your-rights education and youth development, Centro Legal de la Raza ensures access to justice for thousands of individuals throughout Northern and Central California.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Left: Art posters generously provided by Malaquías Montoya from the 10th, 20th, 30th, 40th, and 50th anniversaries of Centro Legal de la Raza

## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Executive Director Theresa L. Gonzales, Co-Founder Albert Moreno, and Board Chair Rosanna M. Neagle

June 30, 2020

### Beloved Community,

As Centro Legal de la Raza celebrates its 50th year of existence, we commemorate and lift up the countless staff, advocates, organizers, attorneys, volunteers, board members, partners and community members who have inspired and shaped Centro Legal's phenomenal legacy. Mobilized by the Civil Rights Movement of the late 1960's, Centro Legal's pioneering leaders imagined the world we wanted then, and have committed to the long and arduous arc of justice.

*"The challenges that faced the community were the same challenges that faced us. We were not separate. If you're not involved in the broader social justice issues, then you are a bystander,"* said former Executive Director, Victor Ochoa.

As Victor stated, we are who we serve at Centro Legal and our commitment to community is to use everything within our power to ensure our self-determination and liberation by protecting and advancing our human and civil rights, while simultaneously creating new systems, policies and practices

that exemplify our shared values. This is not only an outward facing endeavor but a challenge many social justice nonprofits face internally, trying to inspire and sustain a healthy workforce with limited resources while addressing increased community need. Even though we endured through hardship, trauma and oppression in 2018-19, we also had many wins. More wins than we have room to acknowledge in this report. I will name a few of our internal victories. In March 2019, Centro Legal negotiated our first collective bargaining agreement to improve our internal organizational culture and the livelihood of our staff members, such as increasing salaries and benefits. We also diversified our leadership team and strengthened our bearing capacity and infrastructure with the exponential growth experienced the past three years.

Through a rigorous organizational renewal, restructure and unionization effort, with a racial equity lens, we've already begun to see our investments bear fruit. Centro Legal maintains itself as a relentless leader and change agent in the State of California and nationally, as a premier community-centered legal service provider, fostering leadership development and advocacy.

We humbly carry the torch and hold ourselves accountable as stewards responsible for carrying Centro Legal's mission and legacy forward — one that has thrived on activism, healing and justice.

In love, strength and power,

**Theresa L. Gonzales**  
Executive Director





# IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS

## UNDER THIS ADMINISTRATION, WE HAVE FOUGHT TIRELESSLY TO UPHOLD THE RIGHTS OF NONCITIZENS AND ASYLUM SEEKERS.

Immigrants and people of color face relentless attacks through policies that terrorize our communities. Today, parents and children at the border remain separated and held in ICE detention centers. ICE continues racial profiling, and unjust immigration laws mean that we are vulnerable to criminalization and deportation. These disparities have deepened vulnerabilities within our communities that already lack safety nets and basic resources.

Sylvia sought help from Centro Legal's immigration clinic four months before her 18th birthday. She migrated to the U.S. from El Salvador at a time when the current administration stopped asylum cases by instituting the poorly named 'Safe Third Country' rule for migrants who seek asylum after traveling through a third country before arriving in the U.S.

Faced with this challenge, Centro Legal's team decided the best approach was to apply on Sylvia's behalf for special immigrant juvenile status, a pathway to a green card for children which includes a family court component. Unfortunately the family court judge refused to issue the requisite findings for special immigrant juvenile status. Because Sylvia was approaching 18, Centro's lawyers swiftly filed an appeal, partnering with the Alameda County Bar Association, who connected us to a pro bono state court appellate law specialist. In a quick turnaround, the California Court of Appeal overturned the original decision and approved the petition, just days before Sylvia's birthday.

Time was not on our side, but persistence and dedication prevailed. "This is the best birthday present I could have imagined," said Sylvia.

Centro Legal continues to stand firm to overcome systemic obstacles to provide legal representation to clients. It is with that commitment, that we will continue our fight for justice and for clients like Sylvia's for the next fifty years.

### APRIL 1969

Eight Chicano law students at UC Berkeley's Boalt Law School formed Centro Legal de la Raza.

### DECEMBER 1973

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) is signed into law. Centro hires upwards of thirty staff, training them as paralegals and general clerks.

### JUNE 1976

Centro organized against police brutality when 27 year-old Jose Barlow Benavides was shot by an officer. Centro represented the Benavides family and won a civil lawsuit resulting in a damages award for the family.

### JUNE 1978

Prop. 13 passed, and the rollback of property taxes led to significant budget cuts for Centro. From a total staff of thirty-five, Centro's staff decreased to five employees.



# WORKERS' RIGHTS

**GABRIELLE WAS DETERMINED. THOUGH SHE WAS A YOUNG WOMAN IN A MALE-DOMINATED FIELD, SHE WAS PASSIONATE ABOUT HER WORK AS AN AUTO BODY TECHNICIAN. SHE BEGAN ATTENDING SCHOOL TO SHARPEN HER SKILLS, IN HOPES OF GROWING A SUCCESSFUL CAREER.**

However, she noticed that her employer was not paying her correctly. Her employer failed to provide breaks, overtime pay, business expense reimbursements, and paid sick leave. Moreover, she was the only woman working there. She was flooded with discriminatory comments because of her national origin and sexual orientation. Gabrielle complained to her supervisor about the discrimination and harassment she was experiencing, and her employer retaliated by moving her to a different location and lowering her wages. Unsurprisingly, her employment ultimately came to an end.

Always determined, Gabrielle knew she had options. Centro Legal's Workers' Rights team knew that she had legal recourse and got to work. The Workers' Rights team worked with a Youth Law Academy summer intern, Christina. (Christina actually already knew Gabrielle through her soccer team!) It was a complicated case, and the team collaborated to navigate a complex wage and hour calculation. Their hard work paid off, and Gabrielle successfully resolved her case. Now, Gabrielle is finishing up school and dreaming about opening her own business. The large settlement from her case will help make her dream a reality.

*"Thank you for helping me and for helping many people with low incomes... Believe me that Latinos are very proud that people like you exist, with good hearts. I hope more centers open like the one where you work to help more people in the community. We hope that one day there is no more discrimination."*

— Gabrielle

## APRIL 1982

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act was defunded and strict legal services regulations for the Legal Services Corporation were imposed on community services organizations like Centro, preventing any funding for organizations servicing undocumented immigrants. Centro lost 100% of its government funding.

## JULY 1982

Congressman Edward Roybal Sr. and Mayor Ronald Dellums raised \$20,000 for Centro. This and a small contract with the Legal Aid Society of Alameda County barely sustained Centro's legal services operations.

## NOVEMBER 1986

Centro shifted its focus to providing legal services, working with Central and South American immigrants to apply for citizenship. Passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act allowed Centro to focus on other projects.





# TENANTS' RIGHTS

## LISA HAD VERY LITTLE TIME. THOUGH SHE WAS A LONG-TERM TENANT, HER LANDLORD FILED AN UNLAWFUL DETAINER LAWSUIT BASED ON A BAD FAITH ALLEGATION OF FAILURE TO SUBMIT RECERTIFICATION DOCUMENTS.

When she walked into our clinic on July 2018, she knew her chances for assistance were low. She had weeks until her eviction, and was turned away from other providers (as getting in front of a judge to stop an eviction usually takes 3-4 weeks).

Moreover, Lisa had a section 8 voucher. If she had an eviction, she would lose the voucher and would have been permanently barred from the program. For a low-income single mother of two young children with no family support, she would have been left unhoused.

Unfortunately, Lisa is far from alone in her frustrating circumstances. "The majority of people being evicted in most cities are women of color. Most of Oakland's unsheltered are African American. According to the The Housing & Dignity Project's report published in 2018, Housing Oakland's Unhoused, 'African Americans are 28% of Oaklanders, but are 68% of the unhoused.' This is due to historic and present day systemic, institutional, and personal racism. Evictions

are violent and oftentimes racially motivated," said Monique Berlanga, Tenants' Rights Directing Attorney.

Thankfully, the Tenants' Rights team successfully petitioned the court to set aside the judgment. Unfortunately, her landlord then filed a second bad faith unlawful detainer lawsuit on the pretext that Lisa's family member (who provides childcare) was an unauthorized occupant. Centro's team pushed on and negotiated a settlement agreement that allowed Lisa to stay in her home, preserve her voucher, and to have her family member present to provide childcare.

### 1992

Erlinda Castro, a former staff member, became the new Executive Director, and with a new, stable source of funding, was able to develop programs to defend Latino students who were unjustly disciplined.

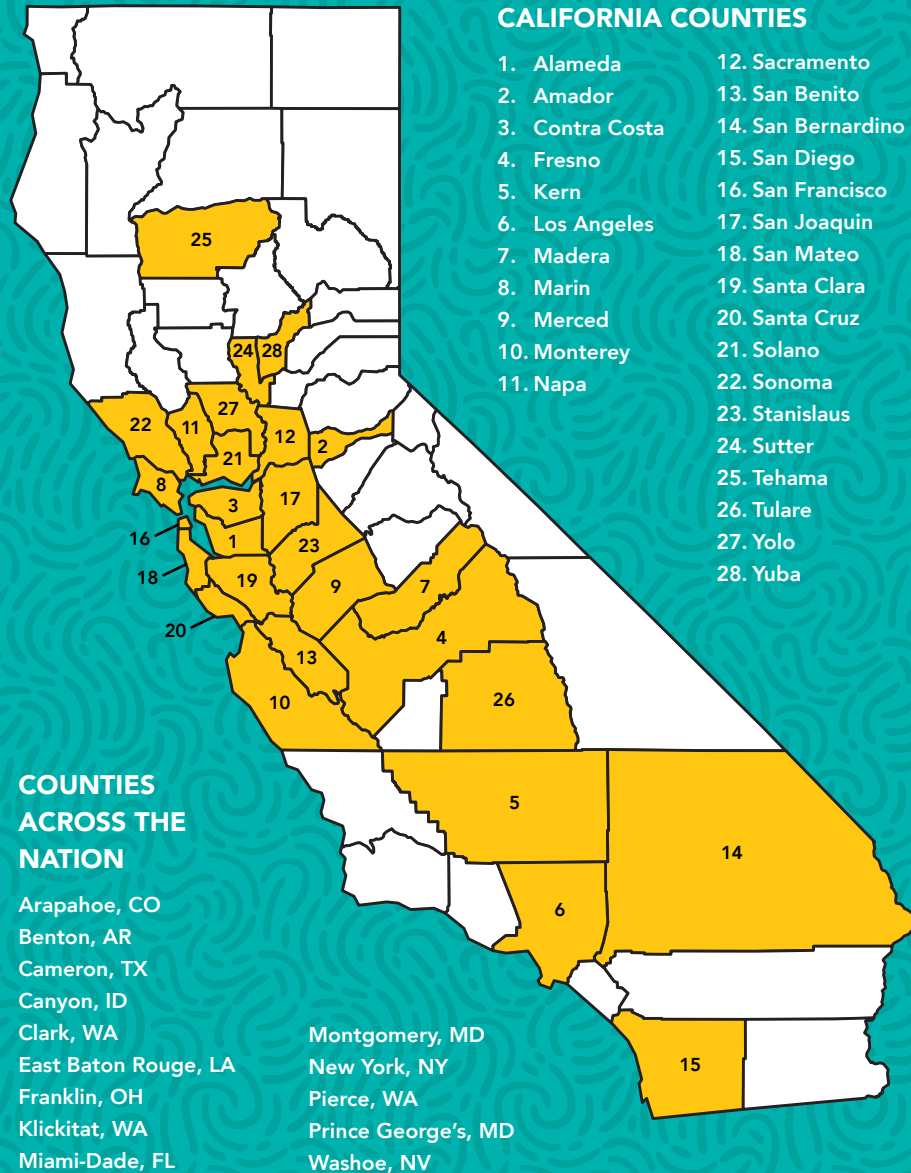
### 1994

Once again, funding did not come through and Centro was in dire straits. Victor Ochoa then assumed the position of Executive Director. In the next couple of years, there was a resurgence of student volunteers.

### 1996-1997

Centro partnered with the East Bay Community Law Center and the Homeless Action Center to do a Tenants' Rights Project that supported tenants living in substandard conditions.

# CENTRO LEGAL DE LA RAZA'S REACH



## IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS

The Immigrant' Rights Practice is one of the largest in the state, and is focused on serving the needs of our most vulnerable community members, including families living in poverty, long residing undocumented immigrants and families, youth, victims of violent crimes, asylum seekers, and detained individuals in removal proceedings.

## TENANTS' RIGHTS

The Tenants' Rights Practice works to stop housing displacement, and stabilizes our communities through eviction defense, drop-in legal clinics, affirmative litigation, critical policy advocacy, and administrative hearings before rent boards.

## WORKERS' RIGHTS

The Workers' Rights Practice provides legal services to low-wage workers, regardless of immigration status. The workers we serve are employed in industries where wage theft and other serious violations are commonplace. Access to free, quality legal services attorneys makes a vast difference in the outcomes for these workers.

## LITIGATION

Centro Legal's Litigation Director collaborates across our legal programs to represent our clients and communities in affirmative lawsuits and impact litigation to protect their rights and improve conditions more broadly. From 2018-2019, we represented thousands of clients and class members, fighting against abusive immigration detention and bond practices, wage theft and sexual assault in the workplace, and tenant harassment and substandard housing. This fiscal year alone, Centro Legal collected almost \$2.5 million through court judgments and settlements for over 125 low-income and immigrant clients, and brought about critical policy changes for long-term systemic change.

## YOUTH LAW ACADEMY

The Youth Law Academy is a three-year program for Oakland high school students designed to build confidence and understanding of the path to college. Recognizing the need for more diversity in the legal profession we ultimately hope to inspire our students to seek a career in the law for the betterment of our community.





# YOUTH LAW ACADEMY



**"I MAY NOT HAVE KNOWN WHAT I WANTED TO DO AT 15, BUT WHEN YLA CAME INTO THE PICTURE, IT WAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE A CAREER WITH AN OPEN MIND. YLA CHALLENGED ME**

**TO ANALYZE THE WORLD FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES. THIS WAS WHERE I LEARNED ABOUT THE BLACK PANTHERS AND SOCIAL ISSUES AFFECTING COMMUNITIES OF COLOR.**

Being the daughter of immigrants, and experiencing the struggles my parents and grandma had in acquiring public services, I knew I wanted to make a difference.

When I got accepted to UC Berkeley, YLA's leadership stood beside me to nurture my abilities and interests. They helped me get an internship with Maria Sager, attorney at Boxer & Gerson, LLP as well as work with Aidin Castillo, Directing Attorney for Immigrants' Rights at Centro Legal. Being in a legal setting, I saw people that looked like my dad in need of counsel. It was personal, a full circle realization that how I can serve my community is by representing them as a lawyer.

I am currently studying for the LSAT and will be applying for law schools in the Fall of 2020. I will be studying immigration law, Class of 2024. At 15, I may not have known what I wanted, but now I am on a path to make a difference."

—Cecilia, YLA Alumni

## OCTOBER 2000

Patricia Loya becomes Executive Director. Centro was not financially stable, and worked hard to raise \$37,000 from donors.

## 2001

Carlos Mares, a *jornalero*, began organizing day laborers in Oakland and reached out to Centro for a Know Your Rights session after ongoing police profiling. This sparked the Day Laborer Movement in Oakland.

## 2005

Mara Chavez-Díaz organized prominent members of the legal and education fields to secure funding for the new Youth Law Academy.



*Top: Centro Legal de la Raza Board of Directors; Bottom Left: Director of Programs & Advocacy Carolina Martin Ramos and former client and student at U.C. Berkeley Cristhian Pineda Díaz; Bottom Right: Board Member Sergio García and Co-Founder Albert Moreno*

## CENTRO LEGAL CELEBRATED ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY GALA AT THE OAKLAND MUSEUM ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2019.

It was a beautiful night wherein we recognized our passionate community of supporters, committed staff, Board members, community advocates, legal partners, volunteers, and elected officials who have helped shape our organization and vision to become the premiere legal organization it is today.

Together, we honored the communities that have played a role in the fight for justice. We enjoyed an amazing, moving indigenous ceremonial blessing and performance from group Calpulli Teokalli, congratulatory remarks from Mayor Libby Shaaf, and special recognition from U.S. Representatives Barbara Lee (CA) and Debra Haaland (NM).

We presented Centro Legal's Spirit Award to former client and current UC Berkeley student, Cristhian Pineda Diaz. Sergio Garcia, Centro Legal Board Member, presented Co-Founder Albert Moreno with our Legacy Award.



# CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF CENTRO LEGAL DE LA RAZA!

For the past fifty years, we have remained committed to prioritizing human dignity above all else, ensuring we endure as a powerful movement advocating for deep progressive change. We will continue to work with low income, immigrant

communities of color to speak against injustice and work with local leaders and fellow advocates to create systems that generate safety, security, dignity, and belonging for all.

### JANUARY 2014

Jesse Newmark receives seed funding from the Skadden Foundation to start an affirmative litigation project at Centro. By 2019, Centro has collected more than \$5 million in court judgments and settlements for its clients.

### JANUARY 2015

Growth in government funding allowed Centro to grow its Immigrants' Rights and Tenants' Rights teams.

### NOVEMBER 2018

Centro hired Executive Director, Theresa L. Gonzales, to work on organizational sustainability focusing on infrastructure, leadership development, and racial equity.

### MARCH 2019

Centro successfully negotiated their first collective bargaining agreement with the Engineers and Scientists of California, IFPTE Local 20.



# OUTCOMES FY18-19

## IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS

**1,386** CONSULTATIONS  
**1,330** TOTAL CLIENTS  
**833** DEPORTATION REPRESENTATION  
**2,056** KNOW YOUR RIGHTS REACH

## WORKERS' RIGHTS

**\$1,699,217** FOR 84 WORKERS  
IN SETTLEMENTS & JUDGMENTS  
**513** CONSULTATIONS  
**162** EXTENSIVE SERVICES PROVIDED  
**172** LEGAL REPRESENTATION

## YOUTH LAW ACADEMY

**40** COLLEGE YOUTH  
**15** DLP STUDENTS  
**16** LSAT SCHOLARSHIPS  
**36** HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH  
*For four years, the Diversity Legal Pipeline* has provided a comprehensive bootcamp where students demystify the law school experience.

## TENANTS' RIGHTS

**1,808** CONSULTATIONS  
**1,577** TOTAL CLIENTS  
**244** LEGAL REPRESENTATION  
*Advocacy Highlight:* The Tenants' Rights team was actively involved in passing Measure Y in Oakland, which extended just cause protections to residents of owner-occupied triplexes and duplexes, and subsequent efforts to extend rent control to the same tenants.

# FINANCIALS

## SOURCE OF FUNDS

**56%** Government Grants: \$5,289,694  
**20%** Foundation Grants: \$1,872,209  
**13%** In Kind Contributions: \$1,247,135  
**6%** Individual Donations: \$626,943  
**5%** Fees for Services: \$462,027

## USE OF FUNDS

**85%** Program Services: \$8,888,038  
**13%** General and Administrative: \$1,371,311  
**2%** Development: \$249,633

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Revenue and Support without Donor Restrictions	\$10,141,030
Revenue and Support with Donor Restrictions	-\$643,022
Total Revenue and Support	\$9,498,008
Total Expenses	-\$10,508,982
Change in Net Assets	-\$1,010,974
<b>Net Assets at the Beginning of the Year</b>	<b>\$4,954,444</b>
<b>Net Assets at the End of the Year</b>	<b>\$3,943,470</b>

## FINANCIAL POSITION

Current Assets	
Cash	\$3,927,043
Grants, pledge receivables and prepaids.	\$2,441,241
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$6,368,284</b>
Net property and equipment	\$90,216
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$6,458,500</b>
Total Current Liabilities	\$2,515,030
Total Net Assets	\$3,943,470
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$6,458,500</b>

# THANK YOU!

**CENTRO LEGAL DE LA RAZA IS GRATEFUL TO OUR SUPPORTERS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS FOR HELPING EXECUTE OUR MISSION OF PROTECTING AND ADVANCING THE RIGHTS OF LOW-INCOME, IMMIGRANT, BLACK, AND LATINX COMMUNITIES THROUGH BILINGUAL REPRESENTATION, EDUCATION, AND ADVOCACY.**

It is through your thoughtfulness and commitment that we are able to provide culturally humble, quality services for some of the most impacted members of our community. Your kindness and generosity helps meet emerging needs and challenges, while assisting our clients in accessing the healing and justice they deserve.

## FUNDERS

Akonadi Foundation  
Alameda County Housing and Community Development  
Bernard E. & Alba Witkin Charitable Foundation  
California Change Lawyers  
The California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice

California Department of Social Services  
California Office of Emergency Services  
The City of Oakland  
The County of Alameda  
Family Violence Law Center  
Hispanics in Philanthropy  
Impact Assets  
The Justice & Diversity Center of The Bar Association of San Francisco  
Latina Giving Circle (Pleasanton)  
Latino Community Foundation  
The Legal Services Trust Fund Program of the State Bar of California, Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA)  
Oakland Fund for Children and Youth  
Morris Stulsaf Foundation  
San Francisco Foundation  
Silicon Valley Community Foundation  
Sunlight Giving  
Vanderbilt Family Foundation  
Y & H Soda Foundation  
Zellerbach Foundation

## 50TH ANNIVERSARY GALA SPONSORS

### Premier

Morrison Foerster  
The Morrison Foerster Foundation

### Visionary

Anonymous  
Cooley  
Kirkland & Ellis  
Fenwick & West LLP  
Stephen & Lori Taylor

### Catalyst for Change

Colleen & Bob Haas  
Law Offices of John E. Hill  
Kirkland & Ellis  
Kazan McClain Partners' Foundation  
The Miranda Family  
Dan Purcell & Heather Hanly

### Partner in Justice

Dorothy Fernandez & Lisa Stenmark  
Levi Strauss & Company  
Alice McTighe  
Albert F. Moreno  
Rosanna Neagle  
Signature Bank  
DLA Piper  
Farella Braun + Martell  
Garcia Gonzalez Fund  
Law Offices of Andrew Wolff  
Winston and Strawn, LLP  
Boxer Gerson Attorneys at Law, LLP  
Alan Weiss & Cheryl Burke

### Advocate

The Clorox Company  
Colleagues of Albert Moreno from Levi Strauss & Co.  
Covington & Burling  
Durie Tangri LLP  
Hanson Bridgett  
Salinas Law Group  
Stephanie Tang  
Apical Apps  
The Unity Council  
Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati Foundation  
LiUNA! Laborers Local 304

### Community Ally

ACLU of NorCal  
Daijogo & Pedersen  
First Republic Bank  
Christina Kothari  
Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger LLP  
Karen Matcke Crosby  
Law Office of Scott A. Mossman  
Franco Muñoz Law Firm, P.C.  
Martin Sul & Norma Lopez  
Office of Alameda County Supervisor Richard Valle

*We apologize for any errors or omissions on these lists.*





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