Supporting Labor Research and Education in the Central Valley
A UC Merced Community and Labor Center funding opportunity

The UC Merced Community and Labor Center is announcing the "Supporting Labor Research and Education in the Central Valley" twelve-month funding opportunity for Fiscal Year Ending (FYE) 2023 and FYE 2024 (two separate submissions/ award periods).

The aim of the initiative is to build upon UC labor center research, education and public engagement, in the Central Valley region.

Funding will provide up to $100,000 in support for FYE 2023 or 2024 for each collaboration led by a UC Merced faculty member, or individual researchers (e.g. students, academic appointees or non-senate faculty).

Funds may be used to pay for course releases, summer ninth salary, graduate student researchers, undergraduate student researchers, or any direct costs associated with labor research and education (particularly applied labor policy research, and public education); or for the direct costs of developing a major proposal to advance labor research and/or education.

Submissions are invited in any of the following areas: workers' rights, workforce development, technology in the workplace, unions' role in building civic capacity, and equitable economic development. Some particularly noteworthy issue areas of interest are mentioned below.

1. *Workers' rights*. What dynamics shape enforcement and compliance of working standards (e.g. wage and hour, workplace health and safety), and what implications exist for the health and well-being of workers? How do worker organizations build community, inform efforts around compliance, or expand workers' rights?

2. *Workforce development*. What skillsets, certifications, trainings, or pathways exist for industries and occupations projected to decline due to demographic, technological, environmental, or policy changes? How might co-ops present opportunities for undocumented workers lacking work authorization? How might state policies support a just transition among high earning workers (e.g. oil and gas workers) and their families who enter jobs more sustainable for the environment?

3. *Technology in the workplace*. How does the development of technology have implications for employer/employee relations, or the rights of vulnerable populations (e.g. undocumented immigrants)? How might the state innovate policy solutions to protect and expand the rights of workers and vulnerable communities?

4. *Unions' role in civic capacity-building*. How do unions build civic capacity for major policy change expanding social and economic rights, or improving living or working standards? How can improvements in working conditions lead to social, economic, and racial justice, in and out of the workplace?

5. *Equitable economic development*. How might major economic development projects incorporate elements of equitable economic development (e.g. local hire provisions, pre-apprenticeships, affordable housing trusts, etc.) that promote more democratic workplaces and raise working and living standards?

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Submissions are highly encouraged that focus on: industries disproportionately represented in the Central Valley, such as agriculture, meatpacking, and dairy; emerging industries, such as warehousing; low-wage industries, such as construction and food service; workers lacking the same rights, such as immigrants, black workers, agricultural workers, or domestic workers; or industry workforces that need to be centered in just transition planning, such as agricultural or oil/gas workers.

Submissions will consist of a 1,000 word proposal that briefly describes the following elements of proposed projects:

1. *Building a long-term foundation for labor research and education at UC Merced*, such as:

- A team led by an early career (e.g. pre-tenure) faculty or lecturer (e.g. assistant teaching professor);
- A team with an early graduate student and/or early undergraduate student;
- Regular meetings and mentoring

2. *Advancing understandings of labor issues* related to either of the following:

- The Community and Labor Center's existing research projects or areas;
- Issue areas of shared interest between a) unions and b) community or environmental organizations

3. *Research, education or public engagement deliverables*, such as:

- Applied research leading to center-published fact sheets, briefs, reports;
- Public education, such as community lectures, panels or forums;
- Public engagement utilizing trainings, workshop, programs (e.g. journalism), or use of audio/visual rhetoric (e.g. murals or theatre that advances civic capacity-building)

4. *A track record of capacity-building*, including any of the following:

- Community-engaged research that has led to some policy outcome;
- Meaningful relationships with Central Valley community, environmental or labor organizations;
- Willingness to spend time relationship-building during hours that accommodate community (e.g. evenings, weekends, summer) while "moving at the speed of trust."

5. *Expressed willingness to contribute service with the Community and Labor Center*.

Proposals must be submitted to Edward Flores, faculty director, UC Merced Community and Labor Center at eflores52@ucmerced.edu no later than Friday, November 4.

Announcements of FYE 2023 awards will be made Friday, November 11.

Proposals may receive a revise-and-resubmit, for final submission by a deadline to yet be determined.