

Cesar Lara

Professional Summary: Results-driven leader with 20+ years of experience in workforce development, public policy, and community empowerment. Proven ability to drive initiatives that advance social justice, labor relations, and economic equity. Adept at strategic planning, program management, and fostering collaborative partnerships to achieve systemic change.

Professional Experience:

California Federation of Labor Unions (California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO)

Director of Workforce and Economic Development | May 2023 – Present

- Lead statewide initiatives to strengthen labor relations and economic opportunities.
- Develop policies and programs to support workforce training and equitable employment.

Monterey Bay Central Labor Council AFL-CIO

Executive Director | Aug 2006 – Oct 2024

- Spearheaded advocacy efforts for labor rights and community engagement.
- Managed organizational strategy and partnerships to amplify worker voices.

Motivating Individual Leadership for Public Advancement (MILPA)

Director for Policy and Programs | Mar 2020 – May 2023

- Designed and implemented programs to promote leadership in underserved communities.
- Advised on policy development to advance social justice and equity.

Building Healthy Communities, East Salinas

Policy/Communications Director | Jan 2012 – Jul 2019

- Led policy advocacy and communications strategies to address community health disparities.
- Collaborated with stakeholders to drive systemic change in Salinas.

Central Coast Citizenship Project

Executive Director | Jun 2005 – Mar 2020

- Oversaw initiatives to support immigrant integration and civic participation.
- Secured funding and built coalitions to expand program impact.

Additional Roles:

- Secretary-Treasurer, International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 890 | Feb 2011 – Dec 2015
- CA State Director, La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE) | Jul 2004 – Jul 2006
- Congressional Aide, U.S. Congress (Sam Farr) | Nov 2002 – May 2004
- Administrative Coordinator, United Farm Workers of America (UFW) | Jun 2002 – Nov 2002

Education:

California State University, Chico

Bachelor's degree in international relations

Minor: International Business & Chicano Studies | 1996 – 2002

Key Skills: Workforce Development | Policy Analysis & Advocacy | Strategic Planning | Program Management | Community Engagement

Leadership & Board Memberships:

- Board President, Center for Community Advocacy
- Vice Chair, Monterey County Democratic Central Committee
- Board Member, Californians for Pesticide Reform
- Vice Chair, Monterey County Workforce Development Board
- Board Member, Communities for a New California Education Fund

Who is Cesar Lara from Monterey County?

A Labor Leader and Community Advocate in Monterey County

Cesar Lara stands as a prominent figure in Monterey County's labor movement and community advocacy landscape, serving as the Director of Workforce and Economic Development at the California Labor Federation. His career has been marked by a deep commitment to workers' rights and social justice initiatives across the region, demonstrating a consistent pattern of advocacy for working families and marginalized communities.

Leadership in Labor Movement

As an experienced executive with a strong background in public policy, Lara has established himself as a vocal advocate for workers' rights, particularly in the hospitality and agricultural sectors. His role extends beyond traditional labor organizing, as he has been instrumental in addressing critical issues affecting Monterey County's workforce. During the post-pandemic recovery period, Lara emphasized the importance of ensuring working families could rebuild their lives through safe and timely return to work, demonstrating his practical approach to labor advocacy.

Community Advocacy and Social Justice

Lara's influence extends significantly into social justice and immigration rights. As the Executive Director of the Monterey Bay Central Labor Council, he has been particularly vocal about immigrant workers' rights and community safety. His advocacy has been especially noteworthy in Monterey County, which he identifies as home to the largest population of undocumented immigrants in the state. He has consistently emphasized the critical role these workers play in the agricultural sector, particularly in the Salinas Valley, where they contribute significantly to the nation's food supply.

Policy Influence and Public Service

In his role as a community leader, Lara has been involved in various civic oversight positions, including serving on the Measure G Oversight Committee, which was responsible for auditing the city's allocation of \$20 million in tax revenue. His approach to public service often combines direct action with policy advocacy, as demonstrated by his willingness to engage in civil disobedience when he believes workers' rights are at stake.

Budget Advocacy and Fiscal Oversight

Lara has been particularly active in matters of public spending and fiscal accountability. In his role with the Central Labor Council, he has been a critical voice in discussions about public expenditure, notably pointing out that the sheriff's department budget had grown to equal that of the entire city of Salinas. This demonstrates his commitment to ensuring public resources are allocated effectively and responsibly for community benefit.

Conclusion

Cesar Lara represents a multifaceted leader whose influence extends across various aspects of Monterey County's civic life. Whether advocating for worker rights, speaking out on immigration issues, or providing oversight on public spending, his actions reflect a consistent commitment to social justice and community welfare. His work continues to shape local policy discussions and labor relations in Monterey County, particularly in addressing the needs of working families and immigrant communities that form the backbone of the region's economy.