

DESCRIPTION OF LEGAL SERVICES

Insight Center for Community Economic Development believes that improving the access to quality legal services is a key strategy in building sustainable local economies through community economic development (CED) activities. We seek to expand the availability of quality legal services in CED by providing brief advice and representation, dissemination of written materials on legal issues in CED, CED training, and facilitation of information exchange among CED legal practitioners. These services are provided free of charge to qualified legal services projects and attorneys in private practice who provide pro bono legal services to eligible CBO clients. Our attorneys also provide direct legal services on a fee-for-service basis to community-based organizations engaged in CED projects.

Within the field of CED, our priorities are to provide assistance in organizational development and operations, business and real estate development, finance, employment development, and child care facilities development.

Organizational Development and Operations. Organizational development and operations assistance includes the formation of charitable corporations; compliance with corporate, tax and other laws regulating charitable corporations; compliance with government grant rules; dissolutions and mergers; advice and training of directors and officers on their roles and the proper exercise of their legal responsibilities and duties; the formation of subsidiary or affiliated corporations to carry out business and real estate development activities; and the role of lawyers in counseling community-based organizations.

Business and real estate development. Business and real estate development assistance includes advice on the business and real estate development process and the different legal structures available; advice on the acquisition, rehabilitation, development, ownership, and operation of real estate; preparation or review of contracts, leases, purchase and sale, management, joint venture, loan, and other agreements; and advice on the conduct of commercial business activity by tax-exempt organizations, including the tax treatment of unrelated business income and the acquisition or development of business enterprises.

Finance. Assistance with public and private sector financing and reinvestment in poor communities includes the formation and operation of community development credit unions, micro-enterprise loan funds, and community development loan and loan guarantee programs; and advice on reinvestment strategies.

Employment Development. Assistance with employment development and linkage strategies includes the development of first source hiring, living wage, and project labor programs and agreements; worker ownership; securing jobs and contract opportunities from publicly supported development; mechanisms to link residents of low-income communities with good-paying jobs in the local economy; and capacity-building for nonprofit job training organizations.

Child Care Facilities Development. Child care facilities development and expansion includes assistance in identifying barriers to and resources for development; real estate and organizational development advice and assistance; and training on the child care facilities development process.

Our no-cost services are available to eligible California State Bar Trust Fund Programs, their client community-based organizations, and attorneys in private practice who provide legal services to eligible client organizations without charge. Fee for service representation is available to tax-exempt organizations, their affiliates, and organizations seeking tax-exempt status that are engaged in selected CED projects. Requests for assistance and inquiries about our services can be made to Gabrielle Lessard, Legal Director (extension 147), glessard@insightcced.org or Jenny Chung, Program Manager (extension 124), ichung@insightcced.org.