



IMPERIAL VALLEY **REGIONAL** CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE

June

26, 2025

Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice
145 N Street NE
Washington, DC 20530

Re: Letter of Support for the City of El Centro – COPS Hiring Program Grant Application

Dear Review Committee:

The Imperial Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce (IVRCC) is pleased to offer its full support for the City of El Centro's application to the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Hiring Program Grant. The City is seeking \$1,825,891 in funding to hire six additional police officers to enhance its ability to serve and protect the community.

El Centro is a city undergoing rapid growth. With new business activity, increasing housing development, the annexation of nearby properties, and a growing population, the City faces an urgent need to expand its public safety capabilities. A state-of-the-art police headquarters is currently under construction to meet rising demands — but physical infrastructure alone is not enough. The City requires additional personnel to ensure it can maintain a high standard of service and safety for residents, which aligns with part of our mission to promote community prosperity.

Despite its growth, El Centro continues to face significant economic challenges. Approximately 20 percent of its residents live below the poverty line, the median household income is around \$56,000, and only 15 percent of the population holds a bachelor's degree or higher. Furthermore, El Centro is home to a predominantly Latino population — approximately 86 percent — which includes a large number of youth who are especially vulnerable to criminal influence and in need of strong community-based policing efforts.

Given these circumstances, IVRCC also supports the City's request for a waiver of the 25 percent local match requirement. Imposing the match would present an undue financial burden and limit the City's ability to hire the officers needed to meet rising public safety demands.

For these reasons, IVRCC urges the Department to fully consider the City of El Centro's grant request and match waiver. Supporting this application will help ensure a safer, stronger, and more resilient community.

Sincerely,

Sher Cowie
President/CEO