

# Raising the Bar

TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF WORKING PEOPLE



UC BERKELEY  
**LABOR  
CENTER**

The Center for Labor Research and Education (Labor Center) at the University of California, Berkeley, is a public service program that links academic resources with working people. Since 1964, the Labor Center has produced research, trainings, curricula and other materials that deepen our understanding of employment conditions and develop a diverse, new generation of labor leaders.

The Labor Center brings together faculty, students, union members and community leaders to generate strategic approaches to key labor concerns, including the new economy, the changing workforce, and unions in transformation.

*The Center for Labor Research and Education is a project of the Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, Berkeley*

# developing

## FACTS



Hourly wage for the fastest-growing jobs in America today:

▶ less than \$10<sup>1</sup>

Hourly wage for fastest-disappearing jobs:

▶ \$12–15<sup>1</sup>

California workers earning between \$9-11/hour with job-based health insurance:

▶ In 2000: 60%<sup>2</sup>

▶ In 2004: 46%<sup>2</sup>

Percentage by which unionization increased the odds of having employment-based health coverage in California:

▶ In 2002: 42%<sup>3</sup>

“Nothing motivates like a crisis,” says Keith Pace, Northern California Field Director of the California School Employees Association (CSEA), who manages 104 local chapters serving classified school employees from Fremont to the Oregon border. When massive classified employee layoffs followed California’s state budget crisis, Keith became the Statewide Coordinator for CSEA’s Budget Crisis Campaign.

“After 2000, there was a huge change in the external environment. School funding was reduced, health care was gobbling all available resources, and we found ourselves fighting for table scraps,” Keith recalls. “We realized we had to empower our members, and move ourselves from a

‘911 emergency’ mentality. We had to learn how to make strategic choices, if we were to change the status quo.”

Keith Pace found the tools to train a new generation of CSEA members—from janitors and school bus drivers to secretaries—to influence school budget policies, by attending the Labor Center’s 2004 California Union Leadership School (CULS). He and other union leaders spent a week with UC Berkeley faculty and experienced labor practitioners to learn a Strategic Choice Framework (based on the work of Boston University economist, David Weil, Ph.D.) that would help them choose new ways to allocate resources. When Keith returned to his CSEA Field office, he and his staff revised the

process to make it more extensive and relevant; then he offered the updated Strategic Framework to the Labor Center for future trainings, and to the members of all 104 Northern California CSEA locals.

The Strategic Framework has led to a greater focus on statewide legislation and long-term policy. “More and more of our members are participating in our efforts in Sacramento, and they see our successes,” Keith says.

When school districts throughout the state were asked to privatize long-standing school bus driver contracts, the union supported legislation requiring that districts show savings would result if they turned to private drivers. They also discovered that Canadian

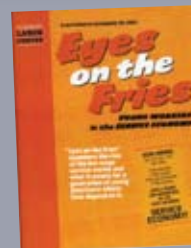
## LABOR CENTER PROGRAMS MAKE A DIFFERENCE



### IN-DEPTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

The California Lead Organizers Institute brings together union and community lead organizers for training on management skills, coalition building, public policy formulation, and other campaign development

techniques. C.L. Dellums African American Union Leadership School prepares Black unionists to engage more actively in their unions. California Union Leadership School gives emerging union leaders tools for success.



### POPULAR EDUCATION MATERIALS

Popular educational and training materials are produced by the Labor Center and used statewide. Examples: *Eyes on the Fries*, a film and workshop for young workers in the service sector;

*Winning at Work*, a textbook for English-as-a-Second Language students, also teaches worker rights; *Homecare Workshop*, a curriculum used to train low-wage homecare workers throughout the state on participating in civic life.

# leaders training the next generation

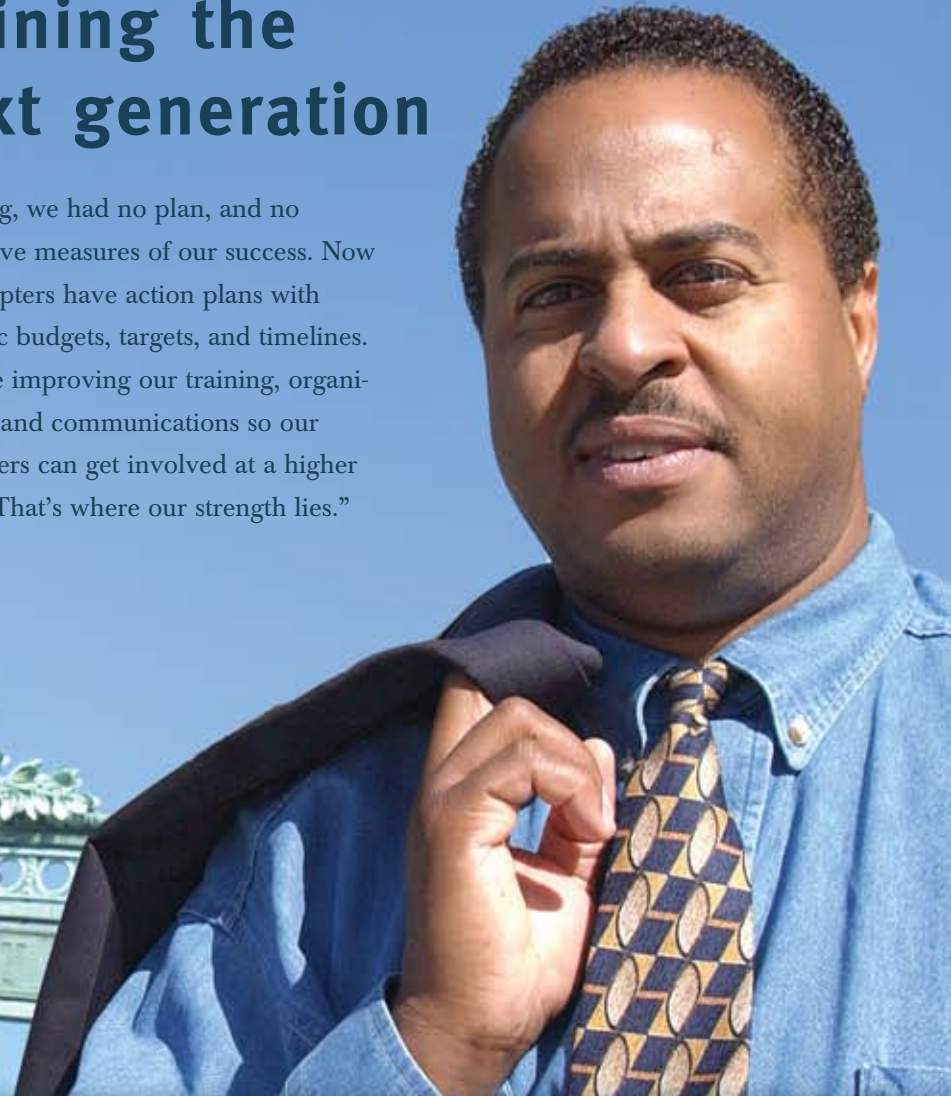
Laidlaw Bus Company would benefit from the privatization, and opposed the change. “We activated our members, educated them on the importance of the legislation, and focused on informing legislators about the impact on local schools,” Keith says, explaining how ‘strategic power mapping’ helped save the legislation and local jobs.

The son of a union carpenter, Keith Pace first joined the CSEA when he worked as a night janitor at a San Rafael school, while he finished his degree at San Francisco State

University. He planned to become a teacher, but instead attended union training sessions, and became president of his CSEA chapter. Keith became a Labor Relations Representative in 1987 in Los Angeles, where he focused on providing service to members, as CSEA grew from 72,000 to 226,000 members statewide.

“We are messengers of hope, recognizing that we need to take collective action to deal with the issues of today,” says Keith. “Before CULS

training, we had no plan, and no objective measures of our success. Now 45 chapters have action plans with specific budgets, targets, and timelines. We are improving our training, organization and communications so our members can get involved at a higher level. That’s where our strength lies.”



## SPECIALIZED TRAININGS

To meet the needs of campus, union, and community groups, the Labor Center has developed dozens of trainings. Core annual offerings include **Strategic Campaign Training** for beginning union researchers and graduate

students; a **Media Skills Workshop** for union leaders and staff, and a high-level **Financial Skills Workshop** on financial planning and budget development. Customized courses are developed for unions, based upon individual need.

**KEITH PACE**  
Union Field Director

## FACTS



Amount of public assistance provided to low-wage working families in California in 2002:  
▶ \$10.11 billion <sup>4</sup>

Predicted decrease in the poverty rate of Alameda County home-care worker families if wages rose to Oakland's 'living wage' of \$10.50/hr: ▶ 20% <sup>5</sup>

Alameda County homecare workers:  
▶ Who are people of color: 76% <sup>6</sup>  
▶ Who are women: 80% <sup>6</sup>

Average turnover at San Francisco International Airport for contracting firms paying low wages:  
▶ Before the implementation of a living wage policy: 48.6% <sup>7</sup>  
▶ After implementation of a living wage: 19% <sup>7</sup>

# research &

“**T**he economy may be growing, but it certainly doesn’t feel like an economic recovery to the millions of American workers whose paychecks are not growing,” says Congressman George Miller. “American families aren’t getting their fair share when their wages are stagnating or falling at the same time that the costs of health care, gas, and college tuition are increasing. The UC Berkeley Labor Center provides us with solid research that documents the problems and points to real solutions.”

The ranking Democrat on the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce, Congressman Miller has been increasingly concerned about the rise in low-wage labor and the decline in quality jobs in this country. He has drawn on Labor Center research in support of ‘high road’ development strategies for the American economy.

A major focus of research at the Labor Center is on the social costs of low-wage work in California and potential policy

solutions, such as living wage ordinances and minimum wage increases. Research has also addressed the particular issues facing young workers, immigrant workers, and African American workers. Field research projects have promoted ‘high road’ strategies in the human services sector, through efforts to improve both wages and benefits for workers and quality of service for consumers.

Congressman Miller brought attention to the impact of Wal-Mart’s labor practices in early 2004, when he released a blistering report that drew on data from the Labor Center, outlining the “labor abuses and hidden costs” of the nation’s largest and wealthiest private employer.

“The Labor Center is helping to reframe the debate on economic development by documenting the costs to society of ‘low-road’ strategies,” Congressman Miller says. The Labor Center’s study, *The Hidden Cost of Wal-Mart Jobs*, released in

## LABOR CENTER PROGRAMS MAKE A DIFFERENCE



### **JOB QUALITY** *Informing Public Policy*

Research on low-wage work informs public policy debate and helps develop policy solutions. Labor Center studies include general trends, and analysis of the impact of

specific policies such as the ‘living wage’ at San Francisco International Airport and the Port of Oakland, and the minimum wage ordinance in San Francisco.



### **‘HIGH ROAD’** *Sectoral Partnerships*

Working with unions, employers, and advocates, the Labor Center facilitates ‘high road’ partnerships in childcare and services for the elderly and people with developmental

or physical disabilities. This approach improves outcomes for consumers by creating better jobs, training, and career opportunities for the direct service workers who work with them.

# policy **evaluating costs & benefits**

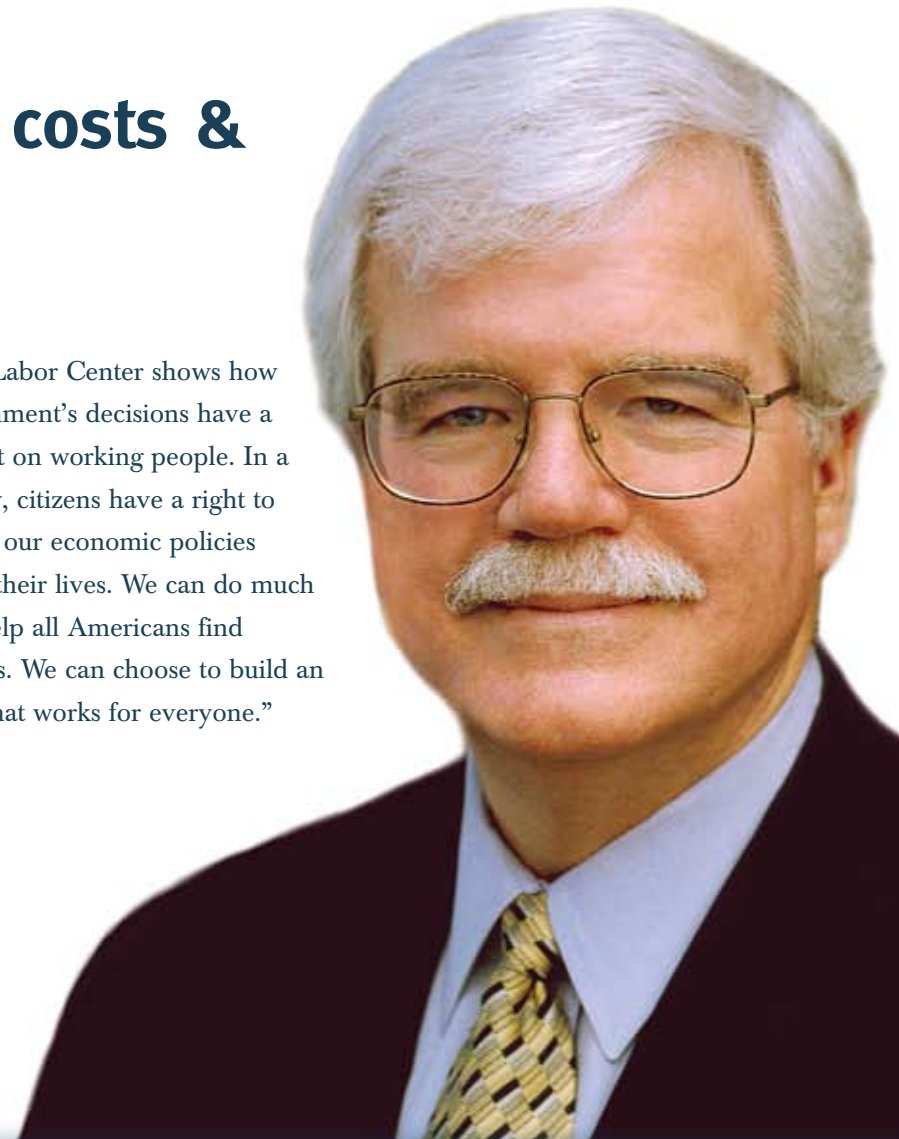
August 2004, was the first to quantify the financial impact of Wal-Mart's low wages and benefits on 'safety net' programs and industry standards. The study received significant national and international press attention, and has been used by city and state policymakers, community organizations and unions around the country to inform public debate about local economic development strategies and proposed legislation.

The Labor Center recently released a report, *Falling Apart*, on the growing health care crisis in the U.S. and California, in the face of declining employer-sponsored insurance. "Sixty

million Americans lack health insurance at some point in the year. We need to find meaningful solutions to make healthcare accessible and affordable for everyone," Congressman Miller reports. "The Labor Center is giving us information we need."

"The Labor Center plays a crucial role in the University community and for those of us in government dealing with labor and economic issues, but also for ordinary working people," notes Miller, who expressed concern over annual attacks on the Labor Center's budget.

"The Labor Center shows how our government's decisions have a real impact on working people. In a democracy, citizens have a right to know how our economic policies will affect their lives. We can do much more to help all Americans find decent jobs. We can choose to build an America that works for everyone."



## **HEALTH CARE** *Trends & Strategies*

To expand health access for low-wage workers, the Labor Center carries out health policy research and assists stakeholders on strategies. Recent projects include consultation

with San Francisco's Department of Public Health to design a health insurance program for taxi drivers, and an analysis of options to expand coverage for workers in the human services.

**GEORGE MILLER**  
U.S. Congressman



# community

## teaching students about work

local high schools and at workshops for young workers. Last year, they joined then-UC Regent Dolores Huerta, UC faculty, and Labor Center staff at Berkeley's first Student Labor Teach-In, providing new organizing and research skills to workers, students and academics from 25 California colleges and universities and 25 community organizations.

"This is the most urgent thing on the planet to be doing," Sonya says, acknowledging the organizing YWU has done with young workers in San Francisco. Their public campaign resulted in a \$4 million settlement and concrete improvements in work-

ing conditions for Cheesecake Factory workers throughout California, who had long been denied breaks and back pay. YWU members were also key to the passage of San Francisco's new minimum wage, which brought the city's minimum wage to \$8.50 in 2004; Labor Center research helped to inform the public about the projected impact of this law. "The majority of young workers are in jobs with no benefits and little regulation," says Sonya.

"The only way to change the current situation is through community building and organizing."



### BRIDGING CAMPUS & COMMUNITY

The **Community Scholars Program** is a joint initiative of the Labor Center and the Department of Sociology, bringing together UC graduate

students, faculty, and community leaders for a joint project of team learning and research.

# SONYA MEHTA

Community Organizer

# linking <sup>with</sup> <sup>the</sup> global economy

**T**hrough the John F. Henning Center for International Labor Relations at UC Berkeley, the Labor Center sponsors educational projects that link California workers with workers in the global economy. Recently the Labor Center developed a popular education curriculum for workers organizing in export processing zones,

based on studies of nine campaigns in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Other projects include a program to teach labor rights in China; research on changes in the global apparel industry; and a video and curriculum about the Free Trade Area of the Americas.





# financial information

## LABOR CENTER REVENUES

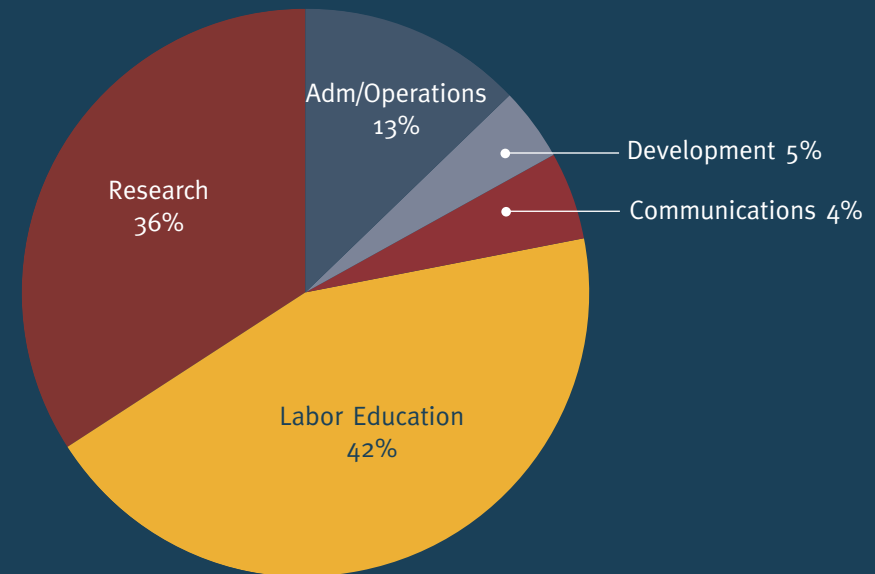
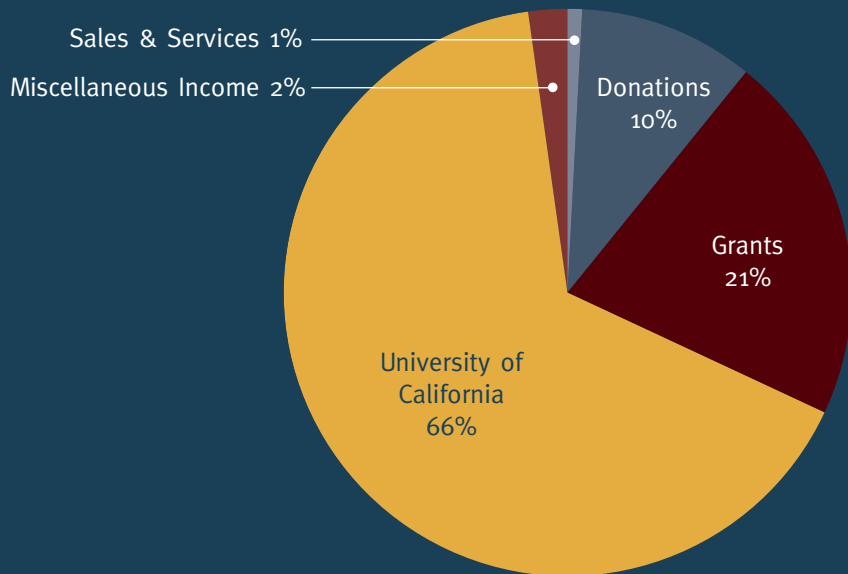
*Fiscal Year 2003-2004*

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA	\$ 801,758
GRANTS	250,924
PROGRAM FEES: TRAINING	157,596
DONATIONS	128,126
SALES AND SERVICES	13,925
MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	25,541
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$ 1,377,870</b>

## LABOR CENTER EXPENDITURES

*Fiscal Year 2003-2004*

LABOR EDUCATION	\$ 560,997
RESEARCH	492,248
ADM/OPERATIONS	177,800
DEVELOPMENT	73,472
COMMUNICATIONS	57,847
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 1,362,364</b>



# Labor Center

# funders & partners

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& Municipal Employees Local 829  
American Federation of Government Employees  
Local 1122  
American Federation of State, County  
& Municipal Employees Local 2428  
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East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy  
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General Service Foundation  
Give Something Back  
Glaziers Union Local 718  
William Gould  
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Heat & Frost, Insulators & Asbestos  
Workers Local 16  
Hermanson's Employment Services  
Hotel Employees and Restaurant  
Employees International Union  
Hotel Employees and Restaurant  
Employees Local 49  
Terry Huwe  
International Association of Theatrical  
Stage Employees Union Local 16  
International Brotherhood of Electrical  
Workers Inside Construction Locals of  
Northern California/Nevada  
International Brotherhood of Electrical  
Workers Local 6  
International Brotherhood of Electrical  
Workers Local 332  
International Brotherhood of Electrical  
Workers Local 340  
International Brotherhood of Electrical  
Workers Local 1245  
International Brotherhood of Teamsters  
Joint Council 7  
International Brotherhood of Teamsters  
Union Local 856  
International Longshore and Warehouse Union  
International Longshore and Warehouse Union  
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New Union Work Systems  
Neyhart, Anderson, Freitas, Flynn & Grosboll  
Office and Professional Employees International  
Union Local 3  
Officers & Members of the Affiliate Organizations  
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Council, AFL-CIO  
Operating Engineers Local 3  
Manuel Pastor  
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Pile Drivers, Bridge Wharf & Dock Builders  
Local 34  
Piper Jaffray Philanthropic Social  
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Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 447  
Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 38  
Plumbers and Steamfitters Union Local 159  
Plumbers and Steamfitters Union Local 393  
Plumbers and Steamfitters Union Local 467  
Plumbing Industry Consumer Protection Fund

Edward & Odette Proctor  
International Federation of Professional and  
Technical Engineers Local 3  
International Federation of Professional and  
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Public Employees Union Local 1  
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Senior Action Network  
Service Employees International Union  
Service Employees International Union  
Local 250 (United Healthcare West)  
Service Employees International Union Local 535  
Service Employees International Union Local 616  
Service Employees International Union  
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Sheet Metal Workers International  
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United Food and Commercial Workers Local 101  
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Amalgamated Transit Union Local 192

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Can a Citywide Minimum Wage Be An Effective Policy Tool? Evidence From San Francisco, by Arindrajit Dube, Michael Reich, and Suresh Naidu, 2005. <http://repositories.cdlib.org/iir/iirwps/iirwps-111-05/>
10. Labor Center statistics



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