

Program Summary

The International Republican Institute's (IRI) good governance programming in Latin America is directed towards municipalities and states in Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Venezuela. IRI works alongside mayors, governors, civil servants and other government officials to encourage transparent, accountable and responsive governing practices. In addition, the Institute helps promote healthy demand for governance by educating citizens on their role in the process, helping local civil society organizations contribute to policy design and oversight, and empowering media to more accurately serve in the public's interest.

Working with Elected Officials and their Staffs

IRI provides tailored technical assistance to governing officials and their staffs, helping them organize their operations and do their jobs more effectively. Common themes built into IRI's assistance include staff organization, budget-development, communications, inter-agency coordination, civic relations, government customer service and policy design. In several cities, IRI also helps in the creation of city-sponsored transparency offices which offer citizens the opportunity to examine public records, ask questions and file complaints.

Regional Partnerships

IRI helps establish partnerships between municipalities that share common characteristics and challenges. These regional and international exchanges bring together experienced municipal leaders – civic and elected – with newly-elected leaders to share practical, first-hand knowledge on good governance practices. Exchange participants come from countries such as Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Colombia, Serbia and the United States.

Working with Civil Society

IRI provides technical assistance to civil society organizations and community advocates so that they are able to keep governments accountable. In several countries, IRI facilitates Citizen Advisory Boards where community representatives provide feedback and suggestions to government officials. In addition, IRI supports the efforts of several watchdog organizations that monitor budgetary allocations, project development and the service of public officials.

Working with Media

Because so much of the public's knowledge on government is framed by what they read, IRI dedicates significant programming to the development of strong independent media. In countries such as Colombia and Bolivia, IRI trains print and radio journalists on how to better cover governance issues, thereby holding elected officials more accountable. IRI also works with city and state governments to be more accessible and transparent to media.

Public Opinion Data

In many cities the Institute offers public opinion research data which highlights particular needs and concerns of municipal citizens, thus helping mayors and city officials formulate effective and responsive governance strategies. As cities make the commitment to focus on subjects people care about most – issues such as public infrastructure, transportation, housing, economic development and public safety – IRI offers to them the opportunity to learn from the best practices and experience of other cities and countries.