



THE INTAKE

Your Contributions to Justice at Work

Issue 12, Volume 2

Dignity in Seafood Processing

You are Providing an Industry-wide Platform for Workers

JUSTICE AT
WORK

In early March, Pescando Justicia, a committee of seafood processing workers at the Centro Comunitario de Trabajadores (CCT), publicly launched their Code of Conduct for the industry. City councilors, representatives of government enforcement agencies, media, and other allies heard testimony from worker leaders about their experiences in the industry. Workers shared both abuses they have suffered and improvements they have won through direct and legal actions, and why the Code of Conduct is so important for all workers in the industry to feel dignified. Thank you for lifting up their voice.

"What we practiced in the course—going in a group to speak with the owner of the factory—we have already put that in practice at our workplace. And now we got our employer to fix the bathrooms and a slippery floor where many workers fell."

-Sergio Lux, First Time Practice-Your-Power Graduate

The launch of the Code of Conduct coincided with the last session of Justice at Work's Practice Your Power course, which brought together Spanish and K'iche'-speaking seafood processing workers to build unity across the industry. Workers practiced telling their personal stories and role-playing conversations with co-workers, employers and other key stakeholders. On average, 28 workers attended each of the five sessions, an increase from our first course two years ago. Veteran members of Pescando Justicia joined Justice at Work and CCT staff to help facilitate the course and support newer

participants, including groups of workers from different seafood processing plants who have successfully demanded improvements on the job, including access to sufficient PPE and bathrooms, in addition to pay equity and new sexual harassment policies and practices. Course participants learned their current workplace rights in addition to examples of how the Code of Conduct would improve upon them: paid vacation, no forced work on the weekend, and responsibility for seafood processing plants, along with temp agencies that supply workers, for workplace violations.

"Without the course, Pescando Justicia probably wouldn't exist. It's our school; we learn about the law and organizing, we feel connected to others, and we gain strength to take actions."

- Veteran Pescando Justicia Member Guadalupe Rivas

Landscaping Workers Get Paid Overtime

You increase the Brockton Workers Alliance's capacity to demand wage justice.

Last November, a group of landscapers reached out to the Brockton Workers Alliance (BWA) to complain about unsafe conditions: operating dangerous machinery without PPE, cleaning gutters without fall protection, and having no ear and eye protection. In addition, their employer was not paying them overtime. BWA contacted us and two workers attended one of our monthly Know Your Rights meetings. We then met with six workers and BWA staff to clarify their rights and come up with an action plan. We counseled the workers on how to engage in a direct action against the employer and drafted a demand letter, which they signed and delivered together. The employer responded by contacting BWA, meeting with the workers, and committing to a safer workplace and payment of all owed overtime. Soon thereafter, when the employer raised an issue related to the workers' immigration status as an excuse to block payment, our team counseled BWA's staff and the workers on how to respond to the employer, ensuring the workers got paid in full: a total of \$55,000.

As BWA supports these workers in getting called back to work this season and enjoying a safer workplace, and as BWA leads as a multi-racial and multi-lingual worker organization, supporting Cape Verdeans and Haitians in addition to residents from Latin America, thank you for joining them!



"Other workers who have been scared to take action will now see that Latinx workers got their OT. Justice at Work helped us push the employer, who hadn't kept records as the law requires and then claimed he couldn't pay immigrant workers."

-Isabel Lopez, Brockton Workers Alliance Director



Update

In response to inquiries, we can report that the hotel housekeepers we featured in last spring's newsletter have settled their wage and hour lawsuit by mutual agreement between the parties. Separately, thanks to their organizing, workers report supervisors respectfully communicate work expectations; workers have a more reasonable number of rooms to clean per day; and, when they arrive at work, their housekeeping cart awaits them fully outfitted. Thank you for remaining with these workers as they have demanded better work conditions since 2019.

"My life has improved thanks to feeling more secure in my job and knowing my rights. Other workers who are going through the same thing: do not be afraid to report abuses and take action. Rights are for everyone regardless of our status." - Maritza, with her coworkers and staff from MassCOSH and Justice at Work.

The Leadership You've Bolstered

Celebrating our Co-Founder Ingrid Nava

We sat down with our co-founder and long-time board president, Ingrid Nava, who wraps up her board term this summer, to get her thoughts on this moment of organizational transition.

Is this what you imagined Justice at Work would become?
"For the most part. Creating legal strategies that help collective worker efforts like Pescando Justicia and Building Justice is definitely what I hoped for."

Has anything surprised you?
"Our ability to support workers to effectively deal with sexual harassment. For example, supporting women seafood processing workers at the EEOC, which led to a consent decree and a big shift in how those managers treat workers."

How do you feel leaving the board after leading Justice at Work in its first 11 years?
"Great. I'm confident that we're on firm footing and workers will continue to use these tools to not only win redress, but to affirmatively push for more. There is so much to accomplish."



Join us to celebrate all Ingrid has done for worker rights at Justice at Work and beyond at our 11th Annual Celebration and Solidarity Awards (see back).



11TH ANNUAL CELEBRATION & SOLIDARITY AWARDS

Thursday, May 19th

5:30pm - 9:00pm

Democracy Brewing

Come join us for food, drinks and music!

Purchase your ticket at

<https://jatwork.org/11th-annual/>

or use the enclosed RSVP card.

Contact info@jatwork.org or

(857) 242-1165 for more info

JUSTICE AT WORK

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