



THE INTAKE

Your Contributions to Justice at Work
Issue 13, Volume 2 (Spring 2023)

JUSTICE AT
WORK

You Ensure Workers Can Speak Up

Over 100 workers apply for new immigration benefit to protect their rights

Over 55 seafood processing workers turned out to the Centro Comunitario de Trabajadores (CCT) in March to learn about their rights and receive counsel from immigration attorneys. Your support allowed us to join forces with The Justice Center of Southeast Massachusetts and UMass Law School to ensure that each worker had their case reviewed, received advice and made an informed decision on whether to apply for a new form of immigration relief. Under the new policy, workers from worksites that are the targets of a government agency's investigation can apply for work authorization if the corresponding agency writes a "letter of support" to Immigration. Thanks to our advocacy, we now expect to serve over 125 workers at a series of clinics, involving students from Harvard, Northeastern, and B.U. as well.

“When large groups of workers come to CCT, as they have in this case, not only do their lives improve, it also changes the social and labor structures that produce systemic abuse.”

-Dax Crocker
Pescando Justicia Coordinator

Reaching new workers through training

Your support allows us to collaborate with new organizations

In the past six months, we have teamed up with new organizations to train workers from new industries, locations and backgrounds. In January, Justice at Work and our long-time partner CCT joined Connecticut-based organizations, the CT Worker Center, The Neighbor Fund, and Sagrado Corazon de Jesus Church, to provide know-your-rights training to workers employed in egg production. To help embolden the workers who power the large industry in northeast CT, we invited a group of our former clients who, through organizing and litigation, have won better treatment at a pallet manufacturer. Closer to home, we began to provide workplace rights training to Project Place in Boston, an organization that supports individuals looking to reenter the workplace after experiencing poverty, substance abuse, or incarceration. In line with our strategic plan that we finalized in 2021, these trainings further our understanding of the issues Black-identifying workers are facing. Thanks for joining us to better inform people who face unique workplace barriers.



Pallet manufacturers addressing egg processors in Windham, CT

“With many of our clients coming from various marginalized backgrounds, knowing their employment rights is important to avoid exploitation.”

- Kelli Rodrigues, Career Coordinator, Project Place

You help recoup illegal transportation overcharges

Class action case informs larger temp agency policy reform

Last month, Justice at Work, with co-counsel from the National Legal Advocacy Network, received preliminary approval of a class action settlement in a case that stands to benefit approximately 1000 temp workers who were unlawfully charged transportation fees to and from work. The illegal practice is widespread, with workers complaining that they are forced into taking vans, paid below minimum wage, and at times even charged for trips they never take. Your support allows us to collaborate with organizations that support temp workers—in this case CCT—to carry out strategic litigation, with the goal of elevating workplace conditions for temp workers in Massachusetts and beyond.



Last November, our staff went to New Jersey to attend the Temp Worker Advocacy Convening (hosted by Temp Worker Justice and New Labor) at the Labor Education Center at Rutgers University (see above photo). We joined MassCOSH organizers and two worker leaders, Doris and Maritza, former clients of Justice at Work who, through organizing and litigation, improved working conditions at a major hotel chain where they work as housekeepers. The convening brought together unions, worker centers, community organizations, legal advocates, and racial justice groups to plan nationally. Since then, Justice at Work and MassCOSH have been strategizing on building a local campaign to better support temp workers' demands.

“The NJ convening was an amazing opportunity to hear worker testimonies and to reflect on the work that needs to be done here to strengthen protections for temporary workers and hold companies and staffing agencies accountable when they violate the law.”

-Fran Sepúlveda Immigrant Worker Center Director, MassCOSH

You helped build up a workers' rights national leader

Celebrating our colleague and friend José Palma

After five years of his inspirational camaraderie and leadership as our Community and Legal Partnerships Coordinator, we are saddened to share that José will be moving to Texas this summer. Fortunately, José plans to stay in the workers' rights law & organizing space, doing leadership development work.

We found a moment to reflect with José on his time with us:

Q: Any takeaways from your time at Justice at Work?

A: *Combining the law and community organizing is a powerful tool that can improve people's lives. Good legal support, combined with workers' courage and determination, wins respect on the job. I'm thankful for the lessons, the laughs during our team "dinamicas," and your appreciating me with my virtues and defects.*

Q: Any message for the workers we support?

A: *Learn the reasons why we had to leave our countries. Learn the rights we have here. Understand there are strong forces that deny our rights, but there are many people on our side, ready to support, and our power is in the collective organizing of our community.*

Q: What's next?

A: *Putting in practice what I've learned here in order to advance the social justice movement. I plan to continue emailing and calling all of you—the board, staff, organizers, workers, supporters—to ask for advice and suggestions. This is not goodbye by any means, but ¡hasta pronto!*

Q: Algo más?

A: *My parents taught me that good friends are those who are with you in the most difficult moments. You supported my family and me facing the Trump Administration threatening to end TPS, and then the COVID pandemic. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.*



Join us to celebrate all José has done for worker rights at Justice at Work and beyond at our 12th Annual Celebration and Solidarity Awards



12TH ANNUAL CELEBRATION & SOLIDARITY AWARDS

Thursday, June 15th

6pm - 10pm

Pipefitters Local 537

40 Enterprise St, Dorchester

Join us for a night of community and celebration!

Purchase your ticket at
<https://jatwork.org/12th-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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