

# FAIR WORK CENTER

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## 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

## STANDING TOGETHER WITH WORKERS

In the past year, Fair Work Center talked to more than 9,000 workers about their employment rights, helped recover tens of thousands of dollars in unpaid wages and supported dozens of wrongfully-terminated workers get their jobs back.

Low-wage workers today face immense challenges. A 2009 study in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago estimated that the average low-wage worker loses \$51 each week to wage theft, out of average weekly earnings of just \$344.\* Projecting those figures nationwide, that represents nearly \$50 billion stolen from workers' paychecks each year. Workers across the country are facing compounding violations: wage theft, discrimination, unsafe conditions and more.

To combat these violations and improve conditions for workers, we train workers in their employment rights and operate a legal clinic to support them when their rights are violated. We bring together workers, government enforcement agencies and elected officials with events like the Worker Voice Summit to give workers a platform to advocate for their rights. We are testing a new mobile app, WorkerReport, that allows anyone in Seattle to report a workplace violation on their mobile device. We are organizing a worker advisory board to guide and inform our work in the years to come. Most importantly, we are working together with workers, other community-based organizations and labor unions to support a powerful grassroots movement of workers who know their rights and how to exercise them.

With the outcome of the 2016 national elections, workers' rights in the United States face an uncertain future. We expect gutting of regulations that keep workers safe on the job, erosion of the Fair Labor Standards Act, judicial nominees that support profits over people and the planet, and many more cases of discrimination in the workplace. These are just a few reasons why our work is more important than ever.

I am proud of all that Fair Work Center has accomplished since opening in April of 2015. I commit to you that we will not stop fighting to build power for workers and protect the gains we have made. We will continue working to ensure every worker knows her rights on the job. We will advocate for improving labor standards and strong enforcement of those standards. And we will strengthen our relationships in Washington and beyond to expand our ability to connect with workers. We hope you will be at our side every step of the way.

Will you stand with us in 2017, so we can stand together with workers?

In Solidarity,



Nicole Vellastro Keenan  
Executive Director

\*Center for Urban Economic Development, National Employment Law Project, and UCLA Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, Broken Laws, Unprotected Workers: Violations of Employment and Labor Laws in America's Cities, 2009. <http://www.nelp.org/content/uploads/2015/03/BrokenLawsReport2009.pdf?nocdn=1>



# FAIR WORK COLLABORATIVE

Fair Work Center provides Know Your Rights and Train the Trainer workshops on employment rights, including health and safety standards, wage and hour laws, and other labor standards. We conduct much of this outreach and education alongside our partners in the Fair Work Collaborative, a group of community-based organizations that serve marginalized populations. We know that low-wage workers—especially people of color, immigrants and refugees, women, LGBTQ people and young people—are more likely than average to be victims of workplace violations. We developed our model to reach these workers by providing culturally relevant, language-appropriate outreach and education that meets workers where they are.

## 2016 COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

21 PROGRESS  
AL NOOR ISLAMIC  
COMMUNITY CENTER  
GOT GREEN  
LATINO COMMUNITY FUND  
LGBTQ ALLYSHIP

NORTHWEST IMMIGRANT  
RIGHTS PROJECT  
PUGET SOUND SAGE  
SOMALI COMMUNITY SERVICES  
THE WASHINGTON BUS  
VIETNAMESE FRIENDSHIP  
ASSOCIATION

# LIFTING UP LGBTQ WORKER VOICES

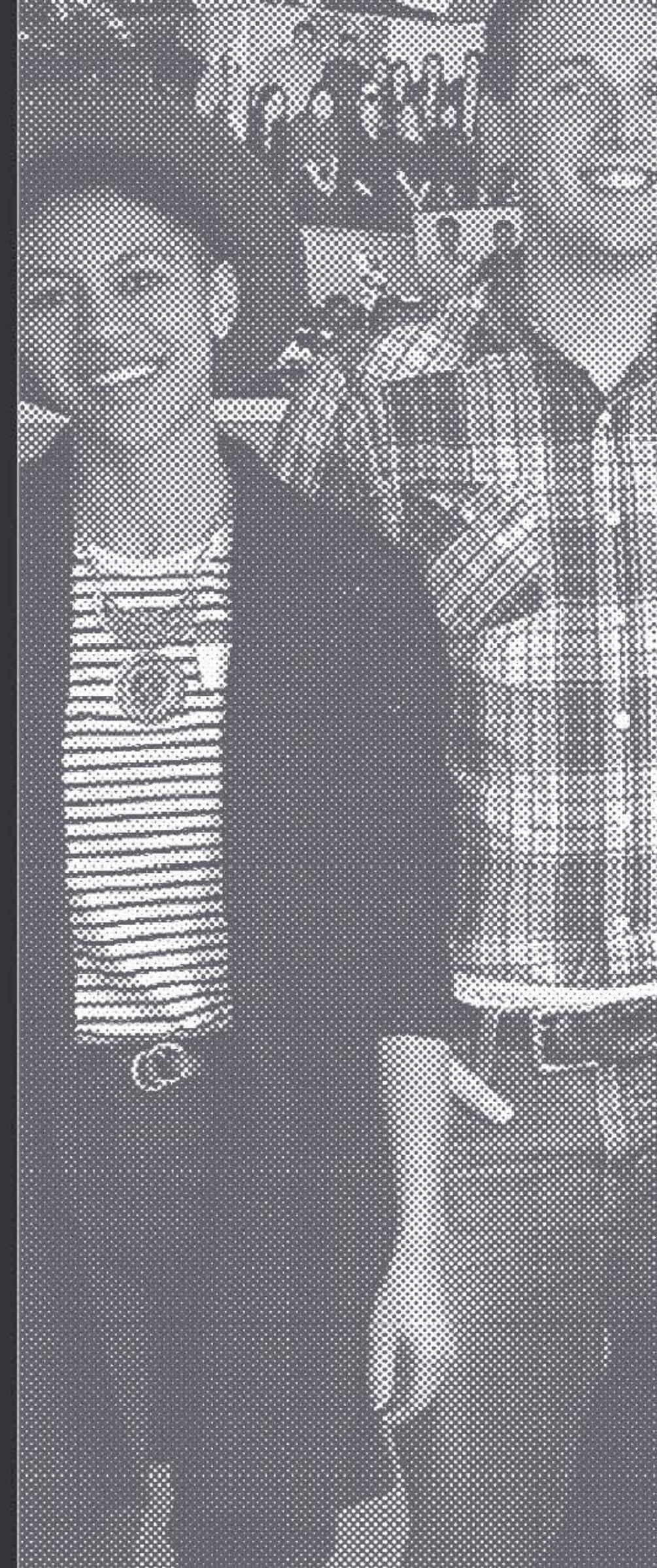
BY DEBBIE CARLSON  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF LGBTQ ALLYSHIP

LGBTQ workers are rarely included in conversations on economic policies intended to improve standards for low-wage workers. Yet, workers in our communities are routinely targets of workplace violations, particularly those workers who are not just LGBTQ but also immigrants or people of color.

The Worker Voice Summit in March 2016 invited workers from a variety of industries and communities to share their stories and advocate for their rights with local elected officials. LGBTQ Allyship, Fair Work Center and over a dozen other organizations came together to organize the event at Seattle City Hall. It was the perfect opportunity to lift up LGBTQ worker voices and was firmly in line with our mission to build power among LGBTQ communities and allies to work towards economic, racial and gender justice.

Allyship recruited a panelist who shared her story of the multiple levels of intersecting discrimination she faced as an trans women of color and undocumented immigrant working as a driver for a delivery company. Her story was truly unique and had a lasting impact on those present, including Seattle City Councilmembers who sought her out afterwards to learn more.

Fair Work Center is a hub for workers, but by hosting events like the Worker Voice Summit, it's also a hub for grassroots organizations like Allyship to plug into policy conversations that have deep and lasting impacts on LGBTQ people in our region.





## WORKER'S STORY

# ANNA



Anna is a single mom from Mexico who was a victim of wage theft that almost left her homeless. Her contract employer owed her \$4,800 for three months of work. She desperately needed a paycheck. Instead, she got an eviction notice from her landlord. Rent was due. Past due. And her employer was not paying.

Anna was referred to Fair Work Center by Fair Work Collaborative partner, Got Green. Tam Huynh, our Intake and Legal Clinic Manager, met with Anna and supported her in writing a demand letter to her old contract employer. Pay Anna in 30 days or she would exercise her rights under the civil legal system. Within two weeks, Anna received half the money she was owed. Within four weeks she was fully repaid. Anna and her daughter kept their apartment.

Anna's story is all too common. It also illustrates what we know about the workers most likely to experience wage theft and other workplace violations: women, people of color, immigrants and refugees.



# MUSES & THE EVOLUTION OF OUR TRAINING

Muses is a non-profit job training program for low-income immigrant and refugee women to break into the apparel manufacturing industry. Muses provides the skills and experience needed in apparel production and connects its graduates to job opportunities with ethical manufacturers. A staff member at one of our Collaborative partners, Puget Sound Sage, recommended we connect with Muses after her mother completed their training program. Muses strives to fully prepare their graduates to succeed in the industry, so they were excited to include a Know Your Rights component in their program. During these trainings, the women often share that they didn't know they had any rights under the law as a worker in this country. Now, every woman who graduates Muses knows her rights on the job and what to do when her rights are violated.

Sam Keller, Program Director at Fair Work Center, led the first training at Muses using the standard Know Your Rights presentation she developed for our outreach and education programs. She quickly realized her traditional presentation wasn't working, as many of the women—from all over the world—were new to English. For the next presentation, Sam and our Outreach Manager, Ahmed Abdi, reworked the presentation to be predominantly image-based and more accessible to someone learning English. After a few more iterations, Fair Work Center now has a Know Your Rights training specifically for limited-English speakers.



# FAIR WORK LEGAL CLINIC

Fair Work Center is unique among worker centers around the country. In addition to our worker outreach and education programs, we also operate a fully integrated law clinic. The Fair Work Legal Clinic opened in September 2016 and focuses on worker education and advocacy through a variety of means.

## INTAKE & REFERRAL SERVICES

Our intake process is worker-centered, timely and welcoming, and focused on achieving resolutions that empower workers. During the intake process we listen to workers' stories, discuss their claims and ensure there is sufficient evidence to seek a successful resolution of their issues. From there, we support workers to chart a path forward that could include legal information, self-help assistance, and/or referrals to government enforcement agencies, private attorneys or our own legal team for representation.

## COMMUNITY CLINICS & DIRECT REPRESENTATION

The Fair Work Legal Clinic is operated in collaboration with the Seattle University and University of Washington Schools of Law and is the only free legal clinic in the Puget Sound area focused on employment issues. Each semester, the next generation of employment attorneys get on-the-job training in the Fair Work Legal Clinic supporting workers who are seeking justice on the job. The Clinic advises and, in some cases, represents workers exercising their rights under local, state and federal law. We also run frequent community-based drop-in clinics in partnership with the King County Bar Association's Neighborhood Legal Clinics program.

## WORKER'S STORY

### FUAD



Fuad works the night shift cleaning airplanes at SeaTac International Airport. He also has a 2-year-old daughter whom he cares for while his wife is at work during the day. Fuad injured his back on the job and required a light duty accommodation while he recovered. His employer demanded that he accept a day shift or lose his Workers' Compensation benefits and, more importantly, his job. Fuad heard about Fair Work Center from our Collaborative partner, Somali Community Services. The Clinic worked with Fuad to write a letter informing his employer that its actions were unlawful. The employer withdrew its demand and is now working closely with Fuad to find a suitable light duty position that accommodates his health and childcare needs.



# OUTREACH DEMOGRAPHICS

OUTREACH TOTAL

9,000+ WORKERS

HOME ADDRESS

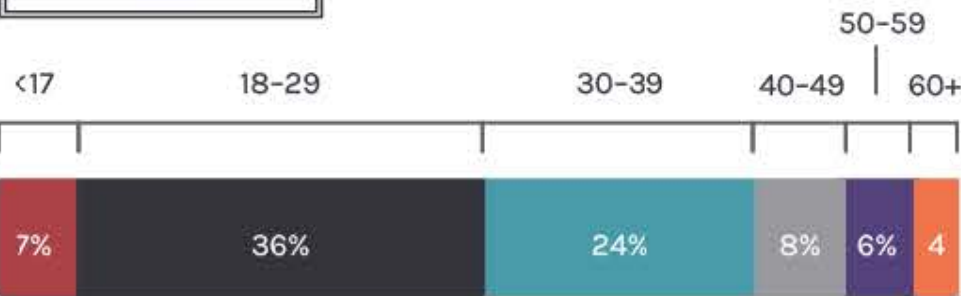
75% IN SEATTLE

82% IN KING COUNTY

6% OUTSIDE KING COUNTY

12% NOT PROVIDED

AGE



16% NOT PROVIDED

RACE



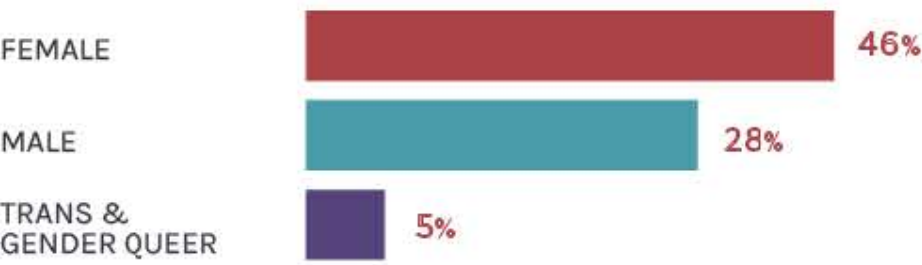
- ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER (28%)
- WHITE (21%)
- AFRICAN (15%)
- LATINO/A (15%)
- BLACK (8%)
- NOT PROVIDED (6%)
- MIXED RACE (1%)

PRIMARY LANGUAGE



Other Lanuages Spoken: Amharic/Trigrinya/Swahili/Oromo (2%); Cantonese/Mandarin (2%); Vietnamese (2%);Tagalog (1%); Other (2%) 20% NOT PROVIDED

GENDER



21% NOT PROVIDED

SEXUAL ORIENTATION



54% NOT PROVIDED

# WORKER INTAKE DEMOGRAPHICS

UNPAID WAGES RECOVERED FOR WORKERS

\$50,000+

CLAIMS OF WORKPALCE VIOLATIONS

|                         |     |
|-------------------------|-----|
| WAGE AND HOUR           | 31% |
| WRONGFUL TERMINATION    | 30% |
| DISCRIMINATION          | 17% |
| HARASSMENT              | 16% |
| PAID SICK AND SAFE TIME | 11% |
| RETALIATION             | 11% |
| WORKER'S COMPENSATION   | 7%  |
| HEALTH AND SAFETY       | 6%  |
| BAN THE BOX             | 2%  |
| FMLA                    | 2%  |

%S DON'T ADD TO 100% BECAUSE WORKERS OFTEN HAVE MULTIPLE CLAIMS

HOME ADDRESS

51% IN SEATTLE

85% IN KING COUNTY

8% OUTSIDE KING COUNTY

7% NOT PROVIDED

RACE



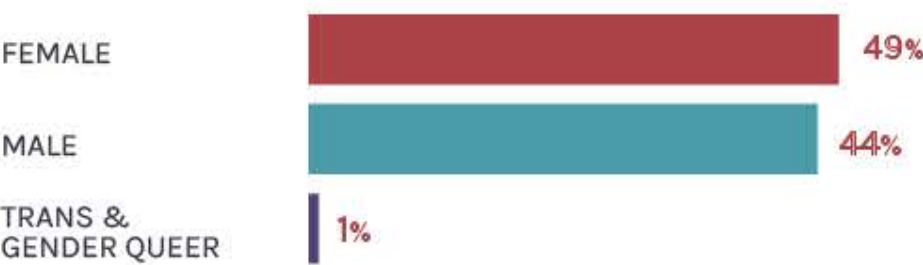
- WHITE (36%)
- ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER (16%)
- NOT PROVIDED (16%)
- LATINO/A (15%)
- BLACK (15%)
- MIXED RACE (2%)

PRIMARY LANGUAGE



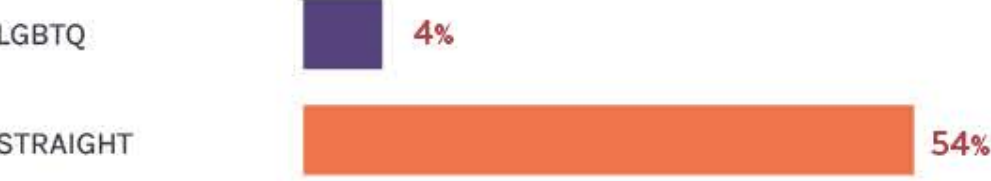
Other Lanuages Spoken: Vietnamese (5%), Mandarin (2%), Cantonese (2%), Other (9%)

GENDER



6% NOT PROVIDED

SEXUAL ORIENTATION



42% NOT PROVIDED



# OUR 2016 BUDGET

## REVENUE

|                            |           |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| GOVERNMENT GRANTS          | \$434,936 |
| FOUNDATIONS                | \$22,500  |
| MAJOR AND INDIVIDUAL GIFTS | \$345,000 |
| TOTAL 2016 REVENUE         | \$802,436 |

## EXPENSES

|                                     |           |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| SUBGRANTS TO COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS | \$130,050 |
| PROGRAMS                            | \$293,223 |
| ADMINISTRATIVE                      | \$154,435 |
| RESERVES                            | \$100,000 |
| TOTAL 2016 EXPENSES                 | \$677,708 |



## OUR 2016 STAFF & BOARD

### STAFF

NICOLE VALLESTERO KEENAN, Executive Director  
ELIZABETH FORD, Legal Director  
SAMANTHA KELLER, Program Director  
TAM HUYNH, Legal Clinic & Intake Manager  
AHMED ABDI, Outreach Manager  
JOSH FOGT, Communications and Development Manager  
HANA KAWAI, Administrative Assistant

### BOARD

MARCUS COURTNEY, Incoming Secretary  
CANDACE INAGI, Outgoing Secretary  
DAVID ROLF, President  
REBECCA SALDANA, Vice President  
REBECCA SMITH, Treasurer  
RICH STOLZ

## A SPECIAL THANK YOU

Fair Work Center expresses deep gratitude and appreciation to the following organizations. Each of these Founding Donors is making a significant, lasting investment in the success of Fair Work Center.

**SEIU 775**  
**BRESKIN JOHNSON & TOWNSEND**  
**TERRELL MARSHALL LAW GROUP**  
**SCHROETER GOLDMARK & BENDER**  
**FRANK FREED SUBIT & THOMAS**

## FAIR WORK CENTER

5308 Martin Luther King Jr Way S B102  
Seattle, WA 98118

The Fair Work Center empowers workers to achieve fair employment. We are a hub for workers to understand and exercise their legal rights, improve working conditions and connect with community resources.

We envision a society in which workers are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of class, gender, or race. We will work to ensure that workers are informed of their rights under the law and that employers are held accountable to labor standards.