

# 2017 Annual Report



## ***Worker justice is necessary for a just economy.***

This is the first line of our mission statement. It's not a pretty sentence, and we considered that, but kept it as simply the truth. It's the sum of our purpose, today and over the 19 years of our history. We will begin to find justice, to match our lives to our values, to end poverty, and to reach equity – only when we face the harsh reality of what work is like for poor people.

The workers we meet are generally those with the lowest wages and the most vulnerability to wage theft, discrimination, and injury. They are doing the daily work that maintains our communities. Most are immigrants. Most work in manufacturing, warehouses, restaurants, retail, cleaning, landscaping, construction or healthcare.

2017 was a year of transition for our two longstanding organizations: the Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice of South Central Wisconsin (ICWJ), and the Workers' Rights Center of Madison (WRC). I was blessed to return to ICWJ early in 2017. In April, the WRC's longtime director, Patrick Hickey, took another position. By July, both boards of directors began the journey toward merger. Today, we are one organization, Worker Justice Wisconsin.

We are gathering strength in our unity, and challenging narratives that would divide us. Workers are members of many groups, including congregations and unions. Our beliefs and values tell us that the fruits of everyone's labor are to be received with gratitude and fair compensation. History tells us that the ability to organize is a vital human right.

In these pages, we highlight our mission and past year's accomplishments. We think you'll be proud of the successes made possible by your financial support and many volunteer hours. Especially now that we are without federal funding, and in a time of decreased worker safety and empowerment, what you do matters. We hope new members will be inspired to join us and encourage friends to learn more.

***Becky Schigiel, Executive Director***

## WORKER JUSTICE WISCONSIN

In Madison: a worker resource and organizing center

Statewide: a coalition for change

Nationally: a part of Interfaith Worker Justice

### *Mission*

**Worker justice is necessary** for a just economy. Worker Justice Wisconsin builds **collective worker power** through training, labor rights education, collective action and **community engagement** with an emphasis on **interfaith involvement**.

### PRIORITIES IN 2018

Wage theft and discrimination:  
awareness and action

Partnerships to protect  
immigrant workers

Worker leadership development

Ensuring a sustainable organization



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## ICWJ Board of Directors in 2017

**Officers:** Sr. Maureen McDonnell, Faith Co-Chair; Mary Bell, Labor Co-Chair; Scott Watson, Treasurer.  
Rev. Kristin Gorton; Paulette Harder; Rev. Peder Johanson; Douglas Keillor; Kurt Kobelt; Craig Myrbo; Hanif Nu'Man; Rev. Michael A. Schuler, Pastor Modesto Enrique Soto.

**Staff:** Geri Gerard; Bruce Moffatt, Becky Schigiel  
AFL-CIO Community Services Liaison: Ann M. McNeary  
Intern: J. Brittany Crawford.

## CONNECTING FAITH AND LABOR

“Women, Labor and Justice Today” was the theme, as Bethel Lutheran Church hosted the **17th Annual Faith-Labor Breakfast**. A keynote panel of Dr. Laura Dresser, Dr. Rebecca Meier-Rao, and Dr. Nan Enstad highlighted women as key labor leaders and theologians and then addressed the pay gap that continues today.

We co-sponsored the **Workers’ Memorial Day** observance and press conference. Becky Schigiel offered the opening reflection and called for action against looming cuts to national worker health and safety education.

On **May Day**, Sr. Maureen McDonnell offered the invocation to start the march to the Capitol, where we followed the leadership of high school and college student Dreamers. Speakers included Mary Bell and Rev. Peder Johanson, who preached:

“An injury to one is an injury to all is the Gospel of Jesus.”



## ENGAGING COMMUNITY AND LEADERS



We reframed the problem of unlivable retail jobs as a community issue, when we hosted the Wisconsin stop of the **Expose Walmart Tour**. We moved the focus from consumers to voters by hosting a press conference in the Capitol. Rev. Jeff Fox-Kline and Pastor Modesto Soto opened the event, which included our labor partners, as well as WI State Representatives.

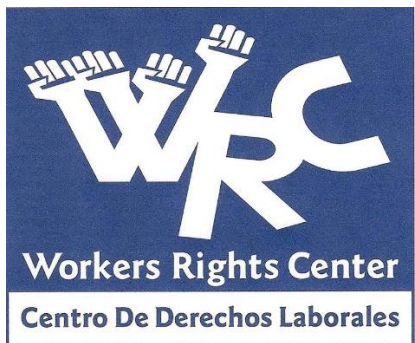
In Madison and in St. Louis, we mobilized on behalf of our national affiliates in the **Fair Food Alliance**. Rev. Peder Johanson and Rev. Amanda Stein called upon the moral obligations of dignity for workers.

Wendy's is the only fast food chain not signing up for independent monitoring to ensure that their vendors provide basic wages, safety, and freedom to farmworkers in South Florida.

Our **Labor in the Pulpit/Minbar/Bimah** Program was held up nationally as a model for groups wishing to start their own program. Once again, many Interfaith Coalition congregations connected worship during or around Labor Day Weekend to themes of labor, wages, and worker safety, assisted by our online collection of resources for worship.



These congregations hosted our board members or director as pulpit guests for Labor Day Weekend: Glenwood Moravian Community Church; James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Church; First Unitarian Society of Madison; Lake Edge United Church of Christ.



## **WRC Board of Directors in 2017**

**Officers:** Carolina Sarmiento, President; Jim Cavanaugh, Vice-President; Jeff Mehrhoff, Treasurer; Mitch, Secretary. Alexia Kulwicz; Charity Schmidt; Bert Zipperer

**Staff:** Geri Girard; Patrick Hickey; Carlos Miranda; Becky Schigiel; Kristen Taylor; Philip Yang

## **228** workers completed “Know Your Rights” trainings.

We held free workshops in Spanish, English, and Hmong, held in numerous community locations and workplaces around Dane County and in other parts of Wisconsin.

The trainings were led by staff and certified worker center members. Most participants were low-wage

and immigrant workers. They learned about wage and hour laws, wage theft, discrimination, and how to spot and respond to health and safety hazards.



## **196** workers met with an advocate.

Workers came to the center individually or in groups, to meet with a staff or volunteer advocate about specific workplace problems. They were referred by a friend or another community agency. Most live or work in Dane County. Because the only other Wisconsin worker center is in Milwaukee, some drove up to two hours to meet with us, and some called from as far away as Green Bay.

Advocates explained the workers’ rights and options, and helped them as they documented losses, wrote letters, filed claims, or took other actions.

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In 2017, workers at the center documented and claimed **\$123,217** in stolen wages. They completed recovery of **\$43,553** by the end of the year.

No matter why they come in to the center, workers always learn about wage laws and how to make sure that they have been paid legally.

**In 2017, workers who came to the center were experiencing these workplace issues:**

- 35% Wage Theft
- 23% Discrimination (includes harassment)
- 15% Discharge & Unemployment
- 13% Injury
- 6% National Labor Relations Act Violations
- 5% Safety & Health
- 2% Disability
- 1% Family Medical Leave Act violations



**and worked in these industries:**

- Manufacturing/Warehouse - 18%
- Restaurant - 13%
- Retail/Service/Landscape - 13%
- Janitorial/Cleaning - 11%
- Construction - 9%
- Healthcare - 9%

- Clerical/White Collar - 8%
- Food production - 3%
- Transportation - 2%
- Childcare - 6%
- Agriculture - 4%
- Hotel - 2%

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## FINANCES IN 2017

### WE ARE THANKFUL FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

While private donations were the same as the prior year, grant funding dropped significantly. Both organizations experienced a loss in grant funding, which has been the majority of the Workers' Rights Center income. ICWJ benefitted from two large fundraising events: the annual Faith-Labor Breakfast in February and a John McCutcheon Benefit Concert in October.

**Across both organizations, 2017 expenses were reduced through a 25% cut in staffing, as compared to 2016. As we have now lost all federal funding due to national budget cuts, connecting with sustainable funding is critical for us in 2018.**

<b>ICWJ 2017 INCOME</b>			
Individual Contributions		18,990	40%
Congregations, Unions & Other Organizations		5,497	12%
Events		21,263	45%
Grants		1,500	3%
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$47,250</b>	
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Salaries		31,771	62%
Operations		12,194	23%
Events		7,521	15%
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$51,486</b>	

<b>WRC 2017 INCOME</b>			
Individual Contributions		23,381	26%
Federal Grants		43,825	49%
City/County Grants		18,032	20%
Fundraisers		2,156	2.5%
Organizational contributions		2,235	2.5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>89,629</b>	
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Programs/ Services		60,536	72%
Administration/ General		23,139	28%
Fundraising		300	(Less than 1%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$83,975</b>	100%