



**2021 Priorities:**  
 Worker Organizing Training  
 Collective Worker Power  
 COVID-19 Vaccine Trust  
 Labor in the Pulpits Program  
 Partnerships with Community Allies  
 Financial Sustainability  
 Organizational Growth

**Our Mission:** Worker Justice Wisconsin advances justice in our community by building collective worker power together with Faith and Labor allies.

## WORKER CENTER

During 2021, worker center operations were a hybrid of in-person and virtual meetings. Workers were much more accustomed to meeting via telephone or Zoom than they had been the previous year, and this enabled staff to work remotely whenever possible due to the continued pandemic. But the office was open to workers who preferred to meet in person, and a few worker meetings took place in the Labor Temple, including Know Your Rights and Worker Cooperative trainings, as well as the Worker Membership Meetings that launched in October of 2021.

In order to implement the collective worker organizing plan established during Strategic Planning at the end of 2020, all WJW staff completed a four-part training program with the School for Workers in the spring and met with organizers at Arise Chicago and CTUL, two well-established worker centers in the Midwest. Subsequently a team of staff members and our summer intern, Angela Maloney, developed a foundational document with collective organizing strategies for WJW staff and worker leaders. We intend to use and further develop this document as we build our worker organizing and membership program.

During the summer, WJW once again partnered with the Madison Civil Rights Department to provide the Certified Community Partner Training for WJW interns and community partners. We also provided a four-part Worker Advocate Training for interns and volunteers.

In 2021, WJW provided the Know Your Rights Orientation to 130 workers and 23 service providers. 118 workers opened a total 152 new Program Engagements (or individual cases); staff dealt with these cases while continuing to work on the approximately 70 Program Engagements that carried over from the year before. Of the workers who opened cases in 2021:

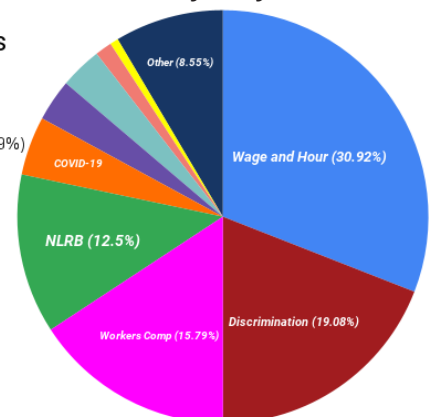
51% were female, 48% were male, and 1% were non-binary;  
 83% were Latinx, 7.5% were African or African American, 6% were White/Anglo, 1% were Asian and 2.5% were Other;  
 80% said their preferred language was Spanish, 19% said English, and 1% said Other;  
 78% identified themselves as immigrants.

WJW assisted workers in recovering a total of \$111,762.26 in previously owed but unpaid wages. We partnered with workers on two workplace collective actions, which provided us with valuable lessons for how to handle future organizing campaigns. We are grateful to the South Central Federation of Labor's (SCFL) Solidarity and Support Network for their mentorship and support during these efforts.

We continue our valuable partnership with the Madison Cooperative Development Coalition (MCDC) by introducing worker-led cooperatives during our Know Your Rights Orientations and individual worker intakes. In 2021 we also offered eight Co-op 101 trainings to 23 workers interested in forming cooperatives in industries as diverse as construction, remodeling, painting, landscaping, restaurants and food carts. We have two burgeoning cooperatives that are ready to begin to work with MCDC – one is a food cart and the other is in landscaping. We continue to assist the cleaning cooperative that formed at WJW in 2020 in any way we can.

### Worker Center Cases

- Wage and Hour (30.92%)
- Discrimination (19.08%)
- Workers Compensation (15.79%)
- NLRB (12.5%)
- COVID-19 (4.61%)
- Unemployment (3.29%)
- Immigration (3.29%)
- Safety and Health (1.32%)
- Human Trafficking (0.66%)
- Other (8.55%)



## FAITH ENGAGEMENT:

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Our Labor in the Pulpits/On the Bimah/In the Minbar program continues to grow. For the 2021 program we developed a Resource Packet in both English and Spanish that includes articles about current worker issues and faith statements. The packet was then published on WJW's and the Wisconsin Council of Churches' websites for easy access. We also published short videos of congregation leaders discussing worker justice from their faith perspectives in WJW's YouTube channel. Video contributors included Rev. Kelly Asprooth-Jackson of First Unitarian Society, Pastor Jeff Vanden Heuvel of Messiah Lutheran, Jennifer Ludtke of St. Thomas Aquinas, Pastor Nick Utphall of Advent Lutheran, and Pastor Marcio Sierra of Lighthouse Church.

Fifteen area congregations confirmed their participation in the Labor in the Pulpits program during the month of September, though we believe many more utilized our resources since they were made so widely available. Notable participants included James Reeb Unitarian, which brought a speaker from the AFL-CIO to discuss the Pro Act; Messiah Lutheran, whose speaker

discussed Biblical verses supporting workers' rights; and Brown Deer Methodist, whose speaker used the 1908 Methodist Episcopal Social Creed to illustrate the importance of the labor movement in establishing some of the denominations' values.

One important development during 2021 was the writing of our Faith & Labor Statement, which is published on our website. We are in the process of asking congregations to sign this statement in support of workers. We continue our outreach efforts with over 90 faith communities in the Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Hindu and Sikh traditions.



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## FAITH AND LABOR STATEMENT

As people of faith, we uphold the sacred and intrinsic dignity of every person. We believe that work should be a vehicle for discovering a sense of purpose and fulfillment, but that too often it is a means for abuse. We recognize that in today's climate, individual workers are at the mercy of more powerful employers, and we commit to joining forces with workers when they collectively summon the courage to demand fair and just working conditions. Finally, drawing on our sacred traditions, we stand together as communities of faith to advocate for:

- A just/living wage and healthcare benefits for all
- Paid sick and family leave
- Workplaces free from all forms of discrimination and harassment
- Opportunities for collective organizing without fear of retaliation
- A healthy work/life balance for all people regardless of race, gender, national origin, immigration status or creed

# FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

## Income

Fundraising Campaigns	\$43,760.53
Individual & Business Contributions	\$39,513.24
Unions	\$14,600.00
Faith Congregations	\$1,725.00
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City & County Grants	\$45,382.00
MCDC Grant	\$30,000.00
Project Respect Grant	\$20,000.00
Other Grants	\$50,500.00
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<b>Total Income 2021</b>	<b>\$245,480.77</b>

## Expenses

Program Salaries	\$162,197.71
Rent and Operational	\$40,942.34
Contract Services	\$25,896.83
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<b>Total Expenses 2021</b>	<b>\$229,036.88</b>
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<b>Net Income for 2021</b>	<b>\$16,443.73</b>

WJW continues to build financial stability through grants, fundraising and individual donations. In 2021 we were awarded grants by Dane County, the City of Madison, the Madison Cooperative Development Coalition (MCDC), Project Respect, the Sinsinawa Dominicans, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, UW Madison's Fueling Philanthropy, Forward Community Investments, the Southwest Association of the United Church of Christ, Summit Credit Union, and TechSoup. We also received generous contributions from the Construction Business Group, Hawks Quindel S.C., SEIU Healthcare Wisconsin, Carpenters Local 314, SMART Local 565, IBEW Local 2304, the Law Offices of Kurt Kobelt, and through Community Shares of Wisconsin.

We had two successful online fundraising campaigns – a Peer to Peer Campaign in the spring, and a Holiday Campaign at the end of the year, which helped WJW raise over \$43K. Participating congregations donated over \$1.7K during the Labor in the Pulpits/In the Bimah/In the Minbar program. We also have a few individual sustaining donors, and we continue to try to grow that program. We are tremendously grateful for all the support we received in 2021 from individuals, faith communities, unions, and granting institutions. Your contributions have enabled WJW to grow sustainably over the past year to better respond to workers' needs and build collective worker power in our community.



*"Hello, my name is Ruby Castañeda. This is the second time I've come to Worker Justice Wisconsin and they've helped me. I ask people that if you experience abuse in the workplace, go to WJW because they will support you. We all have more power when we work together!"*  
--Ruby Castañeda, worker

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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WJW was once again privileged to engage in numerous partnerships with community organizations during 2021. We supported SEIU efforts at Meriter Hospital and Oakwood Village through their bargaining processes, and we continue to support unionization efforts at UW Hospitals. As a member of the Dignity at Work Coalition, WJW took a leading role, along with the Latino Academy for Workforce Development and 9to5 Wisconsin, engaging immigrant workers in a community conversation program about the state budget that we called "Reimagining a Wisconsin Where All Workers are Protected." Based on the findings of those conversations, the Dignity at Work Coalition spoke with the Governor's Office on 4/9/21 to offer recommendations for how to spend the American Rescue Plans Funds they had recently received from the federal government – the central element of our recommendations was that they should allocate funds for undocumented workers and their families who had not received any COVID relief benefits during the pandemic. We also spoke with Reps. Hong and Shelton about their Economic Bill of Rights, and encouraged them to add language advocating for immigrant, refugee and undocumented workers, which they have since done. Finally, the Latino Academy and WJW now co-lead the Coalition's advocacy efforts to make Drivers' Licenses legal for undocumented immigrants.

As has been true in the past, Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice (WVJ) continued being an important partner in 2021. During the summer our organizations received a joint grant from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to promote trust in the COVID-19 vaccine among Latinx and Black communities. We published information and FAQs about the vaccine in English and Spanish through social media, a robust webpage, and traditional print media. We partnered with Voces de la Frontera, the Urban League of Greater Madison, Centro Hispano, the Latino Academy,

the Latino Health Council, the South Central Federation of Labor and UIPAT 7 to host three vaccination clinics. We also distributed approximately 3,000 flyers around Madison and Dane County and took over 50 pictures and statements from people about why they decided to get the shot - this was an important part of promoting vaccine trust around the community.

As stated in other sections of this Annual Report, The Madison Cooperation Development (MCD) and Project Respect remained important partners in 2021. WJW is also now in the process of becoming an Associate Member of the Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC), which is a network of churches and faith-based organizations focused on unity and justice. With the WCC, WJW will be creating a worker justice study guide, which will be housed in our respective websites and disseminated to congregations across the state for use in their adult education programs. The guide educates people of faith on worker and labor rights, with a special emphasis on immigrant workers' experiences and calls to action. Our primary objective is to grow investment in and support of workers—especially BIPOC and immigrant workers—with member congregations throughout the state.

**IMMIGRANTS**  
**ARE**  
**ESSENTIAL**

## ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH

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In 2021, WJW saw a number of new developments related to our outreach, audience, and branding. Perhaps the most notable of these is our new website, which was implemented in December. This is a vast improvement from our previous website—it states our mission clearly, and is more modern, user-friendly, and provides easily accessible channels of communication for all who visit the site. Another important improvement in this area is the development of our weekly blog, which provides a way of discussing topics and relevant events in a less restrictive setting than our social media permits.

Despite new challenges posed by changes in platforms under the Meta umbrella, we have slowly increased our

followers on our social media accounts. We have seen success particularly on posts that have local relevance and engage the community.

Finally, we are very excited to have recently moved to a more spacious three room office in the Labor Temple. It is a nicely furnished and welcoming space. Our new offices are in Room 115, where the Worker Center is now open 5 days a week. Thanks to a recent grant from the Department of Administration, in April 2022 we will also begin utilizing our old office space, Room 116, as a classroom and gathering space for workers and allies.

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## 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Charity Schmidt – *Vice President*

Mary Bell – *Treasurer*

Saul M. Castillo – *Secretary*

Paulette Harder

Jeff Mehrhoff

Scott Watson

Ekpevi Ayite da Costa

Sr. Maureen McDonnell, O.P.

Edna Baldwin

Natalie Gerloff



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## STAFF

Rebecca Meier-Rao – *Executive Director*

Socorro Cortez – *Worker Organizer*

Caleigh Judd – *Faith and Social Media Coordinator*

Sarah R. Soliman – *Office Manager*