



SECOND QUARTER NEWSLETTER

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**EL MIEDO
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PROTEGE**

"FEAR DOES NOT PROTECT YOU"

LABOR DAY 2022

Monday, September 5th

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Worker Justice Wisconsin has gone through some major changes during the past few months: not only have we doubled our number of staff, but we'll be adapting our former office into a training and educational space thanks to one of the many grants we've been awarded in 2022! We continue to work mostly in-office, and our Worker Membership meetings consistently occur at the Labor Temple on a monthly basis. We're in the process of planning new organizing trainings, further developing our core values, and furthering our community outreach efforts. Read on to see what else Worker Justice Wisconsin has been up to this spring!



Polo Duran, Carpenters Local 314 and WJW Board Member, stands with WJW worker members and staff after picketing against tax fraud on April 5, 2022



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MEET OUR NEW STAFF

Robert Christl, *Program Director*

Born and raised in Alabama, I moved to Madison in 2015 to pursue a doctoral degree in the Department of History at UW. I also joined the graduate-worker union, the Teaching Assistants Association, and quickly became involved as a member and then officer. My historical research on working-class intellectuals and my experience with unionism have made me a strong supporter of the labor movement. I am thrilled to join Worker Justice Wisconsin and to participate in local efforts to grow a rank-and-file, democratic, intersectional, and internationalist movement of workers.



Katrina Woods, *Business Manager*

I am happy to be a part of an organization that can give a voice to the low wage and immigrant workers in Wisconsin. As the Business Manager here at WJW, I'm the one who makes sure we have the budget for the programs and that we are financially sound so things can go according to the plans we've laid out for the year. I have also been in low wage jobs that didn't meet my family's needs and had to depend on family and friends to help. I didn't know about WJW at that point in time, but if I had, I would have appreciated making use of our services. This is why I wanted to be part of this organization: We all deserve to be heard by someone who is willing to listen. WJW is that.

Frida Ballard, *Worker Organizer*

I am excited to be a part of Worker Justice Wisconsin and provide support for workers in my community. I have worked as a community medical interpreter and have seen the harm that is done to Latiné workers in Wisconsin. My background in housing cooperatives in Austin, TX as well as Madison has led me into creating more inclusive low-income housing. WJW allows me to continue that role in creating more opportunities to build power through worker cooperatives and collective worker organizing. I'm extremely grateful to work with such a dedicated group of people that I can also relate to personally and culturally.



Gretchen Baumgardt, *Faith Outreach Organizer*

I'm happy to be contracted as the new Faith Outreach Coordinator! I have M.Div. from Notre Dame and a Ph.D. from Marquette University. Interfaith dialogue and social justice have been key aspects of my work in ministry and teaching, primarily with college students. I look forward to continuing to build relationships with our faith allies and collaborating on ways to support worker justice initiatives.



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FAITH OUTREACH UPDATE

Labor Day is Monday, September 5th, and our new Faith Outreach Coordinator, Gretchen Baumgardt, will be reaching out to our faith allies in the next few weeks to invite you to register for our annual Labor in the Pulpits/ On the Bimah/ In the Minbar program during the month of September. We look forward to collaborating with you on this important opportunity to uplift the dignity of work and promote worker justice! Email faithoutreach@workerjustice.org for more information.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS: LABOR IN THE PULPITS IS IN SEPTEMBER!

THANK YOU FOR A SUCCESSFUL OPEN HOUSE!

On May 1st, Worker Justice Wisconsin hosted an Open House for our friends, supporters, workers, faith/community allies...everyone! We were astounded by the turnout and so happy to see so much of our community in-person for the first time in years. Thank you so much for your support--we hope to host more events in the future and are excited to update you on things to come!





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WORKER CENTER UPDATE

Worker Justice Wisconsin is undergoing an exciting transformation. With the expansion of its staff, WJW is dedicating many of its resources to training workers on how to collectively organize. For most of its existence, the center has adopted a crucial role in the community by helping individual employees know their workplace rights and file complaints against bad employers with state agencies. Worker Justice will continue doing this service work, but the staff is also preparing to educate and assist workers who do not have a union but nonetheless are interested in building collective power at their job sites to win better conditions.

To that end, developing a three-part cycle of trainings to equip workers to organize their job and build a rank-and-file, democratic movement. In these trainings, we acknowledge the importance of state institutions in protecting workers' rights, but the emphasis falls on the importance of solidarity and collective action to defend and expand rights in the

workplace. . Starting on July 5, we will offer a regular schedule of this cycle of trainings and coordinate with faith groups and community organizations to take the trainings to where workers are—focusing especially on immigrant and undocumented communities.

We hope that these trainings will not only boost workers' confidence and belief in collective action, but that they will offer a safe space for workers to begin thinking about how to organize their workplaces. We will assist employees who want to establish a workplace organizing committee and recruit their workers into a jobsite campaign. With this change, Worker Justice aims to transform the Madison labor market structurally, building up all workers' power to confront bad employers.

Schedule of in house trainings :
July, September and November:
Tuesdays 10 am and 5 pm, starting with the first Tuesday of the month.
August, October and December:
Thursday 10 am and 5 pm, starting with the first Thursday of the month.
Please consult the schedule on WJW's website for more details. If you are a member of a religious or community organization and would like to coordinate a training with us, please reach out to Robert Christl at robert@workerjustice.org.





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BLOG UPDATES

Did you know that Worker Justice Wisconsin has a blog? It's updated weekly with topics ranging anywhere from board member interviews, social issues, local news, history of worker movements, and more! We're always hoping to feature new contributors: if you're interested in collaborating on a piece, please email caleigh@workerjustice.org.

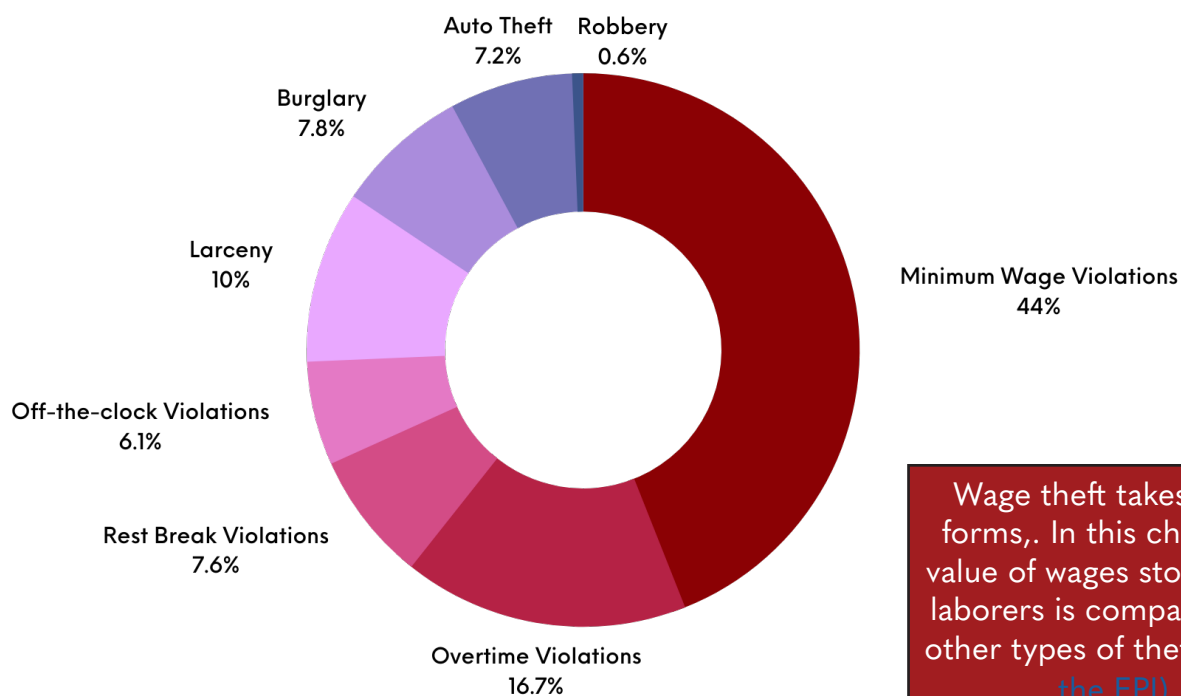
One of our more recent entries focused on a wage theft scam based out of Brooklyn. Read on to understand why worker centers play a quintessential role in these situations, and check out the full article [here](#).

From the outside, 199 Lee Avenue in Williamsburg, Brooklyn looks like a small shipping and packing business. Look a little closer, however, and one finds that over 2,000 LLCs are registered to this address. The address is a front for wage theft (neglectful landlords and management companies are

also registered to this address for similar reasons). One labor attorney mentioned that she's seen 5 different cases of wage theft committed by the companies at this address, and multiple nonprofits testify that they've seen at least 15 wage theft cases associated with the address as well.

In 2019, when some non-union workers hired by one of the many LLCs registered to this address realized their wages were being stolen, they filed a suit with the DoL. It remains unresolved.

Worker centers fill the gaps. A systemic erosion of labor law and a deliberate anti-union movement spanning decades have left workers vulnerable to injustices and manipulation in the workplace, with wage theft being one of countless examples of exploitation. By having a non-governmental organization to turn to, workers can evade some of the bureaucracy that delays the recourse they need.



Wage theft takes many forms,. In this chart, the value of wages stolen from laborers is compared with other types of theft. [\(From the EPI\)](#)

WORKER MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**ALL ARE WELCOME: No need
to be a member to attend!**

*This month's meeting will discuss how to
improve working conditions at our jobs.*

Wednesday, July 13

5 pm to 7:30 pm

1602 S Park St, Room 116, Madison WI

Questions?

(608) 255-0376

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Frida Ballard — *Worker Organizer*
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Katrina Woods — *Business Manager*
Gretchen Baumgardt — *Faith Outreach Coordinator*
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