

Labor in the Pulpits, On the Bimah, In the Minbar
**A September Service Dedicated to Worker Justice Toolkit +
Service Resources**



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Introduction

As Worker Justice Wisconsin honors another Labor Day, we seek to uplift the voices, experiences, and causes of all those who labor in our communities. We celebrate the dignity and value of every worker together with the many faith communities of Wisconsin. The Month of September also provides an opportunity for reflection, prayer, and attentive listening, especially to the experiences of low-wage and immigrant workers. We engage from within our own sacred traditions on the sanctity of work.

Labor in the Pulpits/On the Bimah/In the Minbar is an annual event that we invite communities of any religion, size, and belief system to take part in. This takes the form of a service or set of services during one weekend in the month of September for reflection on workers' rights, the dignity of work, and worker justice. This service allows religious leaders to engage their congregations through prayer and solidarity with workers.

We here at Worker Justice Wisconsin recognize the many commitments our faith communities make to immigrant justice, addressing systemic racism, safeguarding lives of those most vulnerable, and providing mutual aid/ services to communities in need. We also recognize that all who work live at the intersection of these many identities and experiences. We encourage you to take part this year in acknowledging the intersectional nature of workers' rights.

As you hold a Labor in the Pulpits/On the Bimah/In the Minbar Service during the month of September, we ask you to include some of the following elements in your service:

- An opportunity within the service or gathering for a worker from our center and/or member from WJW to share a testimony (available in a pre-recorded video format as well).
- A reflection or sermon on the dignity and rights of the worker, particularly the most vulnerable among us, and the connections to one's religious tradition. This can take the form of relevant scripture, readings, prayers, or songs on the theme of labor (which we provide).
- Prayer or silence to honor the essential workers who lost their lives during the COVID-19 crisis and those who still continue to work in challenging conditions.
- A commitment to supporting future worker-led actions and encouraging congregations to consider how they can do the same
- A special collection to make a donation to Worker Justice Wisconsin (this is also an opportunity for the congregation to become a WJW member with a donation of \$100 or more).

- A donation of Target gift cards to support WJW clients who are currently suffering from food or housing insecurity, or facing other difficulties making ends meet.

As you prepare, please refer to the resources provided in this packet. Contact the WJW Faith Outreach Organizer Caleigh Judd (caleigh@workerjustice.org) or the WJW Executive Director Rebecca Meier-Rao (rebecca@workerjustice.org) if you have questions during your planning process. We are here to assist you!

Basics of Labor in the Pulpits/On the Bimah/In the Minbar

What: A service during the month of September in which congregations partner with WJW by uplifting the voices, experiences and causes of all those who labor in our community, especially low-wage and immigrant workers. Congregations have the option to invite a member of WJW to deliver a sermon/reflection or utilize the resources provided by WJW to develop their sermon or reflection on worker justice.

Why: This weekend of reflection demonstrates your community's commitment to working to achieve social and economic justice in the community. It provides an opportunity for congregants to learn about workers rights and be moved towards action.

Who: Any religious community can host a 'Labor in the Pulpits/On the Bimah/In the Minbar' service. Congregants, community leaders, Pastors, and committees alike can be a part of the planning efforts for the weekend.

Sign Up Form Hosting a Speaker (Religious Communities)

Yes! My congregation would like to host a speaker during the month of September during the weekend

We'd like a speaker for the following services (check all that apply):

Friday

Date: _____ Time(s): _____

Saturday

Date: _____ Time(s): _____

Sunday

Date: _____ Time(s): _____

Would you like the Labor Day speaker to speak Spanish? Other _____

Name:

Congregation:

Address:

City: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

Best Email Contact:

Please return form to caleigh@workerjustice.org or rebecca@workerjustice.org or mail to 1602 S. Park Street #116, Madison, WI 53715

Advertising + Promoting

We invite your community to share information about your Labor in the Pulpits/On the Bimah/In the Minar service in advance, including announcements in your community newsletter or bulletin. See the bulletin insert below for inspiration and utilize these downloadable graphics!

SAMPLE ITEM FOR A CONGREGATION NEWSLETTER OR BULLETIN

Guest Labor Day Speaker

On [the Friday, Saturday or Sunday weekend around Labor Day], we will join with congregations around Wisconsin in the annual Labor in the Pulpits/On the Bimah/In the Minbar program. Sponsored by Worker Justice Wisconsin, this is an opportunity to educate ourselves about the realities of 'essential workers' and reflect on the ways our tradition upholds the dignity of those who work. [Name of speaker and occupation] will join us from Worker Justice Wisconsin on [date] to speak about worker justice in our communities.

Our Contact Information

Worker Justice Wisconsin
1602 S. Park Street #116
Madison, WI 53715

Phone: 608-255-0376

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Twitter](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

Donation Page

<https://give.classy.org/laborinthepulpit>

2020/2021 at Worker Justice Wisconsin:

As difficult as this past year has been for many of us, it was also a time of tremendous growth for Worker Justice Wisconsin (WJW). Our worker center caseload increased, we went through a fruitful strategic planning process; we partnered with numerous faith, labor, and area organizations to raise awareness of workers' rights issues in our community, and have shifted our organizational structure to center on collective worker organizing. The year began with two people on staff; by the end of the year, there were five of us to support the many aspects of Worker Justice Wisconsin.

As previously mentioned, WJW saw a significant rise in cases during 2020 due to the pandemic. In all, workers opened 210 new cases (nearly double the year before) dealing with wage theft (44%), COVID-19 (19%), discrimination (18%), safety & health (9%), workers compensation injury (8%), and other issues (2%). We assisted workers in recovering \$141,040 in legally owed but unpaid wages. Of those who opened cases with WJW, 90% were people of color; 88% were Latinx; 85% were immigrants, and most worked minimum-wage jobs. As per usual, the vast majority of these workers resided in Dane County.

During the pandemic, it was essential to partner with area organizations to ensure the wellbeing of vulnerable workers. We continued our relationship with Project Respect to address the problem of labor trafficking. We renewed our partnership with Madison Cooperative Development Coalition (MCDC) to start new worker-led cooperatives. We gathered and trained workers for a cleaning co-operative until, by the spring of 2021, there was a large group ready to apply for an MCDC mini-grant to launch their cooperative. Additional worker cooperatives are starting the process with WJW currently. We are especially happy to partner with MCDC to build cooperatives because they enable workers to create much better work environments for themselves than would otherwise be possible.

In 2020-21 we continued to be active with the Dignity of Work Coalition, which collaborated with the Madison & Dane County Public Health Department to strengthen messaging about their public health orders in the spring/summer of 2020, and to create a poster in English, Spanish and Mandarin to educate workers about their rights, their employers' responsibilities, and how to file complaints safely during the pandemic. We reached out to Destination Madison and Downtown Madison, Inc. to help disseminate the poster so that it would be displayed in every workplace. We also created two videos, each in English and Spanish, to ensure the safety of all workers: one aimed at workers in Dane County, the other for workers throughout the state of Wisconsin. More recently, we received a joint DHS grant with Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice to build trust in the COVID-19 vaccine among Latinx and African American workers, and to help ensure more equitable distribution. We have also collaborated

with Centro Hispano, Voces de la Frontera, the Latino Academy, the Latino Health Council, and the Urban League among others, to hold vaccine educational forums and clinics.

In the fall/winter of 2020, Worker Justice Wisconsin underwent a strategic planning process where we decided to shift to a model focused on collective worker organizing. This model will help us to stop workplace injustices before they start and to empower workers who have been systematically mistreated in the workplace in order to create a better future for themselves and others.

Our vital community partners in the task of worker organizing are religious congregations, labor unions, and other individual and community members committed to racial and economic justice in the workplace. To that end, we have been meeting with faith and labor leaders to increase awareness about the problems that non-unionized and immigrant workers face (problems exacerbated during the pandemic) and to strengthen our connections to a community of support for WJW worker-led actions and campaigns.

As we engage in this work, this is what we envision for our future:

- A worker membership and organizing program that includes regular trainings, strategy sessions, and celebrations.
- A faith community, union, and individual supporter membership program to build the power of the coalition for economic, racial, and immigrant justice in the workplace.
- Education and engagement with faith communities and labor unions.
- A movement toward collective worker power and worker-led actions/campaigns.

Since the new year, WJW has taken several steps toward collective worker empowerment. All WJW staff, as well as some of its volunteers and members of the board, have participated in worker organizing trainings with Arise Chicago and the UW School for Workers. We are now developing procedures and protocols with workers at our center to strengthen the process of building worker-led campaigns. We have proudly stood with SEIU workers as they called for fair treatment in their workplaces, and we have amplified actions at Oakwood Village and Meriter Hospital. We have participated in actions with Voces de la Frontera to highlight the contributions and sacrifices immigrant workers have made during the pandemic and to call on lawmakers to approve Driver's Licenses for all.

We have prayed, mourned, and gathered (virtually and in-person) with people across the state who tirelessly seek to honor the dignity of all workers. We continue our efforts through this year's Labor in the Pulpits services, which present the realities essential workers have faced during the pandemic, and encourage people of faith to

stand with vulnerable workers to advocate for a living wage, safe working conditions, and dignity in the workplace. May this be a time of reflection and prayer for all those who labor.

Issues Faced by Workers

Wage Theft:

- WPR: [Low Wage Workers Most at Risk of Wage Theft](#)
- The Center for Public Integrity: [Facing Wage Theft? Here's What You Should Know](#)
- The Center for Public Integrity: [Ripping Off Workers Without Consequences](#) - Economic Policy Institute: [Employers Steal Billions From Workers' Paychecks Each Year](#)
- Worker Justice Wisconsin: [Wage Theft Overview](#)

Harassment + Discrimination:

- Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development: [Harassment in the Workplace](#)
- Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development: [Rights of People to Employment Free of Unlawful Discrimination](#)
- Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development: [Discrimination in Employment](#)
- Department of Civil Rights- Madison Equal Opportunities Division: [Discrimination Complaint Forms](#)
- New America: [Making Ends Meet in the Margins: Female-Dominated, Low-Wage Sectors](#)

Injuries and Illness + Labor Trafficking:

- Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking: [About Human Trafficking](#)
- Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development: [Putting Together a Safer Workplace](#)
- ARC Community Services/ Project Respect: [Services for Survivors of Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking](#)
- Wisconsin Department of Justice: [Human Trafficking](#)
- COVID-19: *See More Information on Following Page*

Retaliation:

- National Labor Relations Board: [Interfering with employee rights \(Section 7 & 8\(a\)\(1\)\)](#)
- Economic Policy Institute: [Shortchanged—weak anti-retaliation provisions in the National Labor Relations Act cost workers billions](#)
- Workplace Fairness: [Retaliation for Union Activity/Collective Action](#)

COVID-19's Impact on Workers

Reports:

- [COVID-19 Unemployment Inequality](#)
- [Fear of Retaliation](#)
- [Essential Workers- Immigrants](#)
- [Food Workers Organizing on the COVID Frontlines](#)
- [Honoring the Fallen/Honrando a los Caídos](#)
- [A Demographic and Economic Profile of Undocumented Workers on the Pandemic's Front Lines](#)
- [May Day 2021- Wisconsin](#)

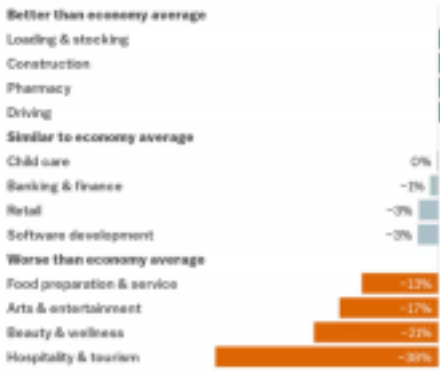
Videos

- [A Year of COVID- 19](#)
- [COVID's Hidden Toll](#)

COVID-19 Unemployment Inequality

Some industries have been hit harder than others

Percent change in US job listings on Indeed since February 2020



Seasonally adjusted
Source: Indeed



Unemployment rates are highest among Black and Latinx workers



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

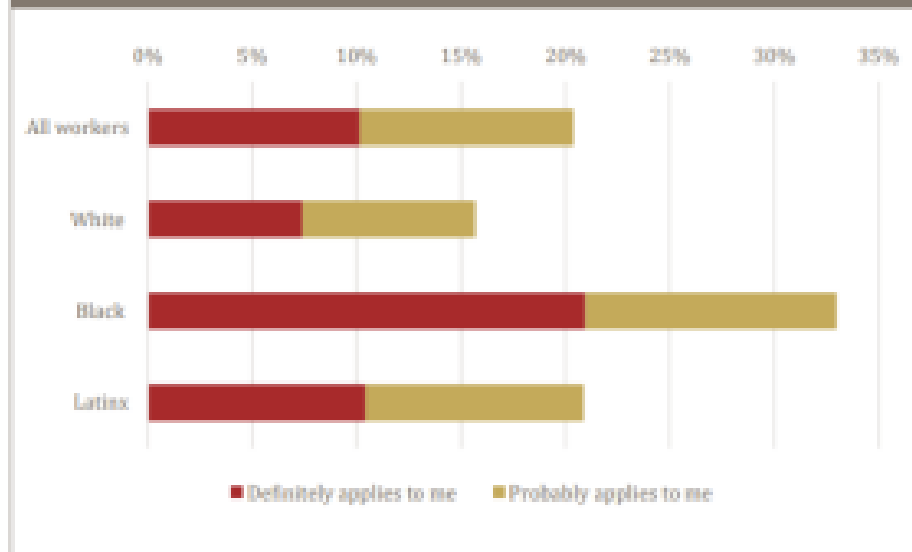


Fear of Retaliation

Respondents also provided troubling descriptions of treatment by employers and managers in response to raising concerns about the spread of COVID-19. They detail situations such as employer hostility toward workers who speak up, terminations of workers who raised health concerns, threats of termination for taking time off, and spreading misinformation about federal worker protections. The following are some of the descriptions that respondents gave in their own words in open-ended survey answer fields. (Because these responses were written by survey participants, they are presented here in verbatim form, including any typographical, grammatical, or other mistakes.)

- "Created an environment where concerns could not be brought to her"
- "Bullying"
- "Told to fall in line"
- "Call me out my name"
- "Ignored them and made them work as if eveything was normal."
- "Laid off"
- "Any who have taken a leave of absence may be fired."
- "Im a frontline worker. My employer states that the cares act does not apply to us"
- "[JBS not doing its job here in tx"
- "Cornered about 84 year old father but he made it clear he didnt care"

Figure 3. "I would speak up more at work about coronavirus job hazards if I could count on strong legal protections against my employer punishing or firing me."



Essential Workers- Immigrants

UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANT ESSENTIAL WORKERS ARE HIGHLY INTEGRATED INTO U.S. SOCIETY

% of undocumented immigrant essential workers

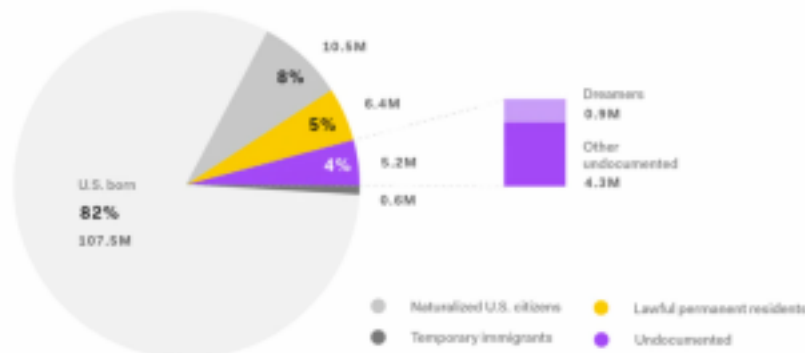


Note: "Speaks English" refers to a self-description of English ability and includes those stating they speak English well or very well or speak only English. Undocumented immigrants consist of Dreamers, including Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders, Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) holders, asylum seekers waiting on a decision, those waiting for an adjustment or change of status, and other undocumented immigrants. Essential workers are based on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's August 2020 memorandum on America's essential workforce. Estimates are limited to those in the labor force. See methodology for more details.

Source: FWD.us analysis of 2020 American Community Survey segmented data.

MORE THAN 5 MILLION ESSENTIAL WORKERS IN THE U.S. ARE UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

U.S. essential workforce in millions, by immigration status

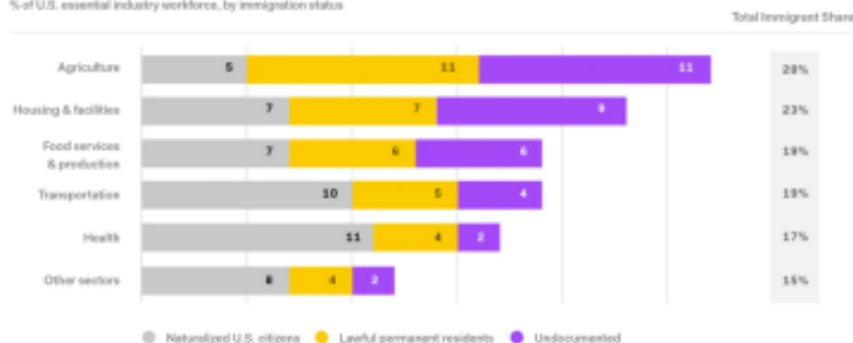


Note: Naturalized U.S. citizens were born outside of the U.S., but have naturalized to become U.S. citizens. Temporary immigrants include H-1B, H-2A, H-2B, H-2E, H-4, J-1, J-2, L-1, L-2, R-1, O-1, and TN visa holders. Dreamers are defined by the 2020 American Dream and Promise Act passed by the U.S. House of Representatives. Other undocumented immigrants include Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders, Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) holders, asylum seekers, those waiting for an adjustment or change of status, and other undocumented immigrants. Essential workers are those in the essential industry labor force based on the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's August 2020 memorandum defining America's essential workforce. Estimates are limited to those in the labor force. See methodology for more details.

Source: FWD.us analysis of 2020 American Community Survey segmented data.

IMMIGRANTS MAKE UP HIGH SHARES OF U.S. ESSENTIAL INDUSTRY WORKFORCES

% of U.S. essential industry workforce, by immigration status



Note: Naturalized U.S. citizens were born outside of the U.S., but have naturalized to become U.S. citizens. The low values may not equal totals due to rounding and that temporary nonimmigrants (not displayed), including H-2B, H-2A, H-2E, H-4, J-1, J-2, L-1, L-2, R-1, O-1, and TN visa holders, make up 2% of essential workers in agriculture, health and other essential sectors. Undocumented immigrants include Dreamers, including Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders, Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) holders, asylum seekers, those waiting for an adjustment or change of status, and other undocumented immigrants. Essential industry workers are based on the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's August 2020 memorandum on America's essential workforce. Estimates are limited to those in the labor force. See methodology for more details.

Source: FWD.us analysis of 2020 American Community Survey segmented data.

Food Workers Organizing on the COVID Frontlines

- “The pandemic is still here but hazard pay has come and gone. As early as March 2020, major food retailers Walmart and Amazon released commercials praising frontline workers as heroes, complete with uplifting music and voice overs telling us how much the company is doing to protect workers. In reality, we know these employers treat workers as disposable, and it was only in response to soaring public demand that they briefly gave in to pressure and initiated bonuses or temporary pay bumps.”
- “Here’s how the big five grocery retailers did “hazard pay” in 2020:
 - Kroger offered \$2/hour boost that lasted approximately 2 months, ending in May.
 - Kroger also spent over \$1B on stock buybacks over the summer, prioritizing short-term returns for their shareholders at the expense of low-wage workers.
 - After the city of Long Beach, California passed a hazard pay ordinance in December of 2019, Kroger announced that they would shut down two supermarket locations in the city to avoid having to comply with the ordinance.
 - Costco offered a \$2/hour boost lasting approximately 3 months, ending June 1.
 - Amazon/Whole Foods offered a \$2/hour boost and double overtime pay, both of which lasted approximately 2 months, ending in May.
 - On June 29, Amazon announced one-time bonuses for all employees who had worked in the month of June: \$500 for full-time and \$250 for part-time Whole Foods, warehouse, and delivery workers.
 - Walmart offered four bonuses to hourly workers: \$300 each for full-time workers, and \$150 each for part-time.
 - Albertsons ended their \$2/hour increase on June 13 and replaced it with a “reward bonus” equal to \$4/hour for average hours worked/week between March 15 and June 13.”
- “The people at the tops of these companies did exceedingly well in 2020 as their profits grew as a direct result of the crisis. As of November 2020, a Brookings report found that Kroger profits were up nearly 100%, Costco profits were up 11%, Amazon profits were up 53%, Walmart profits were up 45%, and Albertson’s profits were up 153%, compared with the year before.”
- “In addition to being at greater risk of contracting COVID-19, Black and Latinx essential workers are also the most likely to lose their jobs or be fired for organizing to protect their jobs. According to a survey by the National Employment Law Project, “Black workers were twice as likely as white workers to report that they or someone at work may have been punished or fired for raising concerns about COVID-19 spreading in the workplace.” Three out of four

Black workers (73%) reported having gone to work despite fears of serious health risks. Pandemic unemployment rates for Black and Latinx workers were also significantly higher than for white and Asian workers. Black and Latina women in particular make up many of the hardest hit groups during the pandemic, often working in jobs that lack paid sick leave and the ability to work from home. As schools and daycares closed, many were also forced to choose between work and parenting.”

[Honoring the Fallen/Honrando a los Caídos](#)

The pandemic has painfully exposed deep socioeconomic divisions that fall along lines of race and nationality, even as it has revealed the country's reliance on immigrant workers and people of color to produce goods and services that are essential to the health of the nation. On this Workers' Memorial Day, the losses experienced by immigrants and communities of color must be honored, and policymakers must resolve to end the politics of hate and division that have exacted their deadly toll on this country.

Throughout the pandemic, day labor and other workers centers have been small but indispensable local hubs for mutual aid, information, food distribution, cash assistance, health referrals, workers rights enforcement, and now, vaccine distribution. By recognizing their valuable role and strategizing together with workers centers, the DOL can accomplish more: creative coordination of resources, information gathering for complaints, strategic enforcement against the worst employers, effective workplace monitoring, and much more.

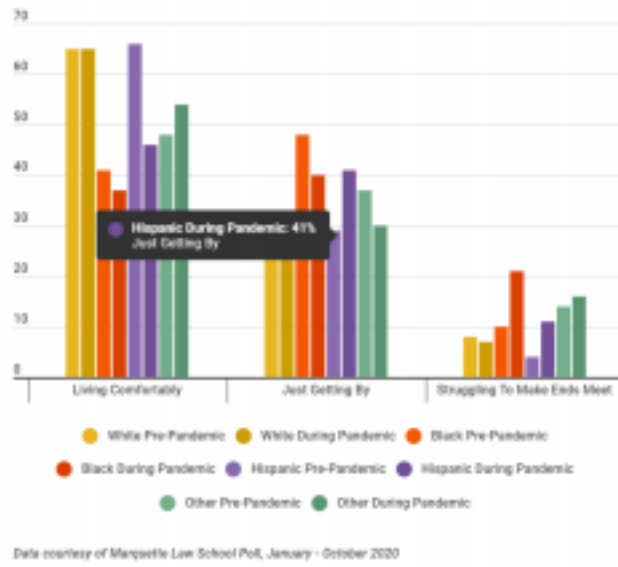
Numerous studies have documented racial/ethnic disparities in COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations, deaths, testing, and now vaccinations. [25] According to a recently published report by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “Several factors contribute to COVID-19 disparities, most stemming from long-standing systemic inequalities and structural racism.”[26] The report authors further note, “COVID-19 disparities should be studied in the context of resource deprivation caused by historical and ongoing discrimination, low socioeconomic status, and place-based risk factors.”[27] Racial discrimination, fears of deportation, crowding in the workplaces of essential industries without adequate protection – all are stressors and risk factors that directly subject immigrants and people of color to premature death.

Worker Stories

[Unequal Power in the Workplace](#)
[Working Wisconsin Worker Stories \(2020\)](#)
[Tale of Two Pandemics**](#)

- “ Laura Dresser, a labor economist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, said part of what explains these disparities is the fact that workers of color are concentrated in low-wage jobs in Wisconsin. Dresser said this recession, which she said might be more accurately described as an "economic collapse," is unusual in its outsized impact on low-wage workers.

Percent Of Registered Voters In Wisconsin 'Living Comfortably,' 'Just Getting By' And 'Struggling To Make Ends Meet' By Race



"People in this state have been having this extremely divergent experience based on if you're someone who is in a precarious position, a vulnerable job," Johnson said. "Or someone who was able to keep working from home, and maybe the largest financial hit you took was simply stopping spending so much money at restaurants or going on vacation."

“People in this state have been having this extremely divergent experience based on if you're someone who is in a precarious position, a vulnerable job”

Workers Of Color Experience Uptick In Financial Instability

Marquette's own data highlights the unequal impact of the pandemic on low-wage workers and workers of color in Wisconsin.

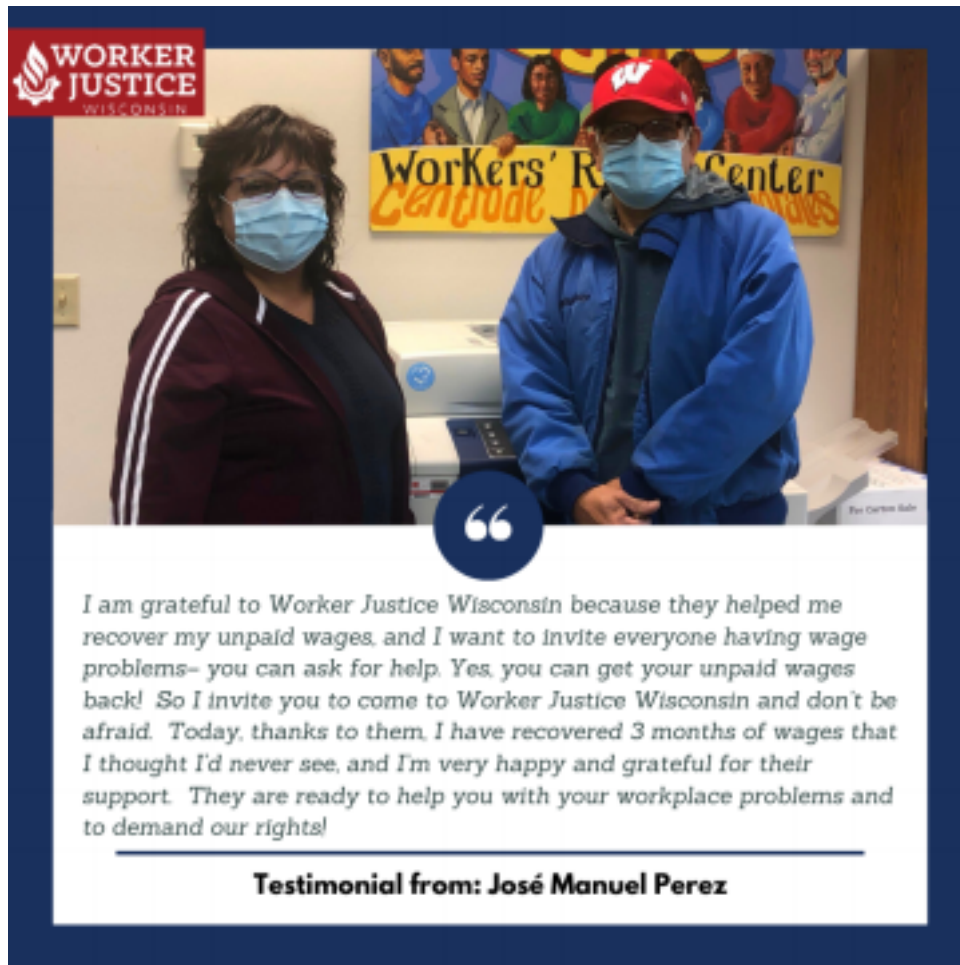
During the pandemic, the number of Black Wisconsinites who said they were "struggling to make ends meet" jumped 11 percentage points — from 10 percent in January and February 2020, to 21 percent between March and October 2020.

The number of Hispanic Wisconsinites who reported "living comfortably" dropped a staggering 20 percentage points, from 66 percent pre-pandemic to 46 percent during the outbreak.

Alternatively, the number of white Wisconsinites in all three categories remained relatively unchanged.

Typically, middle to high-income jobs in construction and durable goods are some of the first to be impacted in a downturn, Dresser said. But in the COVID-19-fueled recession, low-wage workers at places that people often gather have borne the brunt of the downturn, deepening inequalities that already existed in the state.”**

Stories from Worker Justice Wisconsin's Workers



Kirsten McKee, an employee at Oakwood Villages and a member of the SEIU bargaining team:

"Support from Worker Justice Wisconsin was instrumental in helping our bargaining team reach the best possible union contract! WJW helped me and our bargaining team at Oakwood Village amplify our voice and raised our confidence with the community at our backs!"

Worker Cooperatives at Worker Justice Wisconsin:

Worker Justice Wisconsin teaches workers that often the best method of enforcing their rights is not necessarily through government enforcement but through their own collective voice, and collective action. Accordingly, many of the general principles of cooperative governance such as voluntary membership, democratic control, membership economic participation, education and information, and concern for community are shared by Worker Justice Wisconsin. Below are statements from a

cleaning cooperative formed this year at our worker center.

This cleaning cooperative has been especially important in the wake of the pandemic. Unlike other workers, domestic employees are not covered under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), and therefore have few options to collectively organize to stand up for their rights. During the pandemic we saw domestic cleaning companies sending in their employees - even when the Safer At Home Order was in place and they were not supposed to do so - into people's homes with inadequate PPE like rags for masks and shoe protectors with holes in them. Moreover, in some cases they were not allowed to use disinfectant cleaning supplies. When employees brought up their safety concerns to their bosses, these bosses threatened them by saying they would call ICE and/or fire them if they did not do what the boss wanted.

These domestic workers then came to the worker center to request our assistance, and under the present system of laws, we knew their best option was to become their own bosses by forming a cooperative. Once the cleaning cooperative is established in Madison, it will be able to institute the right health and safety measures to keep everyone involved safe. Hopefully it will also demonstrate to other cleaning companies that they should follow suit. In this way, what we're doing with the cleaning worker cooperative can impact not only those involved with the co-op, but all people who clean houses in Madison and Dane County.

Statements by Cleaning Co-operative Members:

“Personally, I have no experience working directly as a member of a cooperative, but my mother belongs to a worker cooperative and I know that she enjoys certain privileges and rights that are given to the members of the cooperative. I started working as a cleaning worker from the moment I arrived in the United States, in August 2001. I have worked cleaning in American TV, Nursing Homes, Gyms and Daycares. Currently I work cleaning in a laboratory. It is important to me to start a cleaning worker cooperative because when we unite we are strong! It is important because it gives a touch of seriousness and support to the cleaning business, hopefully we can get good contracts.” -Gladis Schlobohm

“I have 8 years [experience] working in house cleaning and 3 years working in office cleaning. I like the idea of starting the cooperative to have more opportunities and to be able to have a livelihood for the future. Wage theft, labor abuses and unreliable hours are all things that I have experienced as a worker. I hope to have more control as a member of a cleaning cooperative and make sure these things do not happen.” - Maria Hilario

“What I have seen at work, at least among ourselves as Hispanics, there is more discrimination and we often work hard for bad pay. Starting a worker cooperative is important to me because I want to have my voice heard at work, be an independent person and to be able to employ and help others and provide people with good jobs.” - Juan Carlos Barerra

“I have about 2 years of experience with management with my last jobs, for example with a cleaning team with Target. I have 20 years of cleaning experience with varieties of skills to handle any type of cleaning machine. The same thing with any type of liquids [chemicals]. It is important for me to find and learn new skills and to evolve my experience as a worker. What I have found in my last jobs that I hope to improve and resolve as a member of a worker cooperative, is the problem of language and low wages.” - Santiago Garcia

“I have 20 or more years of general cleaning experience (commercial and residential), laundering, painting ceilings, walls, vinyl flooring repairs, folder, laminate of floating floors, changing bulbs or electricity lights as maintenance of the building. I am choosing to start a worker cooperative for better income, my economy would be a better salary for my family. Low salary is something that I have experienced. I have not personally experienced racism in my jobs but I have witnessed it. I have worked with different non-Hispanic people but very conscientious and with a very good attitude. Well, I want to thank Worker Justice Wisconsin and MCDC for helping us to carry out the organizing of this worker cooperative project, please continue to help us make this a reality.” - Hector Avila

“I have 20 years of experience with both residential and commercial cleaning. In commercial cleaning I have experience Polishing floors, general cleaning, window cleaning, disinfecting, carpet washing. In residential cleaning I have experience with general cleaning, windows, blinds (metal and wood), deep or spring cleaning, disinfecting, turn overs, and post construction cleaning. I worked for a company for 10 years and then I had my own business but I left it because I had 2 babies. As a worker, I have definitely seen discrimination, unequal wages and wage theft. The most important thing for me is to open new paths for people who have no experience, who are not afraid to face the challenge of taking control and becoming a worker owner of a business. It is important that together we support one another, but also to open new paths or new goals for workers like us to get ahead without having to work all day.” - Naomi Aleman

“I Have a lot of experience in cleaning since 1990 working on cleaning offices and houses doing the basics and finding different techniques to do the job. I also have experience using different cleaning machines. I’ve also been discriminated against and given low wages. The most important thing for me is being able to be part of a cooperative that could help others to improve quality of life for our generations to come, to have a quality of life where their rights can be heard, and to not be discriminated against just because we are hispanic.” -Martha Amaya

Resources for Planning Your Service

General Denominational Stances:

- [Link to Denominational Stances](#)

Christian Resources:

- [Labor Day Resources by Denomination](#)
- [Passages from the Bible](#)
- [Putting Labor into Catholic Labor Day Liturgies](#)
- [General Christian Reflection Resources](#)
- [Prayers](#)

Christian Example Sermons:

- [Methodist Sermon](#)
- [Methodist Sermon, #2](#)
- [Methodist Service, #3](#)
- [UCC Sermon](#)
- [Presbyterian Sermon](#)
- [Lutheran Sermon](#)
- [Lutheran Sermon, #2](#)
- [Lutheran Sermon, #3](#)
- [Episcopal Sermon](#)

Jewish Resources:

- [Labor on the Bimah Resource](#)
- [Passages from the Tanakh](#)
- [A Rabbi's Reflection](#)

Muslim Resources:

- [Passages from the Qur'an](#)
- [Labor in the Minbar Resource](#)

Buddhist Resources:

- [Buddhist Reflection](#)

Actions:

- [Sign our Faith and Labor Statement](#)



Worker Justice Wisconsin's Faith and Labor Statement

Worker Justice Wisconsin is an interfaith nonprofit organization that advances justice in our community by building collective worker power together with Faith and Labor allies. It partners primarily with low-wage and immigrant workers because they are among the most exploited in our community. It empowers individuals to fight workplace injustice through education, community building, and collective actions.

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 and living wage 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