



Worker Justice Center of New York

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Worker Justice Center of New York Files Motion to Join Federal Lawsuit Alleging Certain Federal Funding Conditions Are Unlawful

KINGSTON, NEW YORK: The Worker Justice Center of New York (WJCNY) has filed to join as a plaintiff in a suit filed in federal court alleging certain federal funding conditions issued under opportunities for grantees serving trafficking survivors are unlawful. Since 2000, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) has served as a key congressional response to human trafficking by authorizing funding to serve a wide range of survivors, including women, children, and traditionally underserved populations, regardless of immigration status.

WJCNY has relied on periodic federal funding provided through TVPA grants over the years. On March 17, 2026, WJCNY submitted a new grant application for a funding opportunity titled "OVC FY25 Services for Victims of Human Trafficking." That funding opportunity contained conditions that plaintiffs allege are unlawful, including, requiring grantees to certify they do not operate any diversity, equity, and inclusion program components; to comply with seemingly any or all requests by immigration; and prohibit funds from being used to "directly or indirectly" violate federal discrimination law. There is no guidance provided about how these directives are to be interpreted, and potential violations could lead to denied reimbursements or even criminal and civil penalties.

WJCNY's mission is to pursue justice for those denied human rights, with a focus on agricultural and other low-wage workers, through legal representation, community empowerment, and advocacy for institutional change. Providing services to communities of agricultural and other low-wage workers, many of whom are immigrants, is intrinsically tied to WJCNY's core mission and vision. For 45 years, WJCNY has specialized in cases involving labor law. For 26 of these years, WJCNY has operated an anti-human trafficking program, which has repeatedly litigated extreme forms of labor exploitation and human trafficking under the TVPA and sought immigration relief for survivors. WJCNY believes these new funding conditions chill the work of non-profits and will lead to fewer services for survivors of trafficking.

WJCNY is joined by one existing plaintiff, Freedom Network USA, and two other additional potential plaintiffs, Life-Span and Young Women's Christian Association Kalamazoo. All are represented by attorneys from Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (LCCRUL), and the Chicago Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights.

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