



**Worker
Justice Center**
of New York



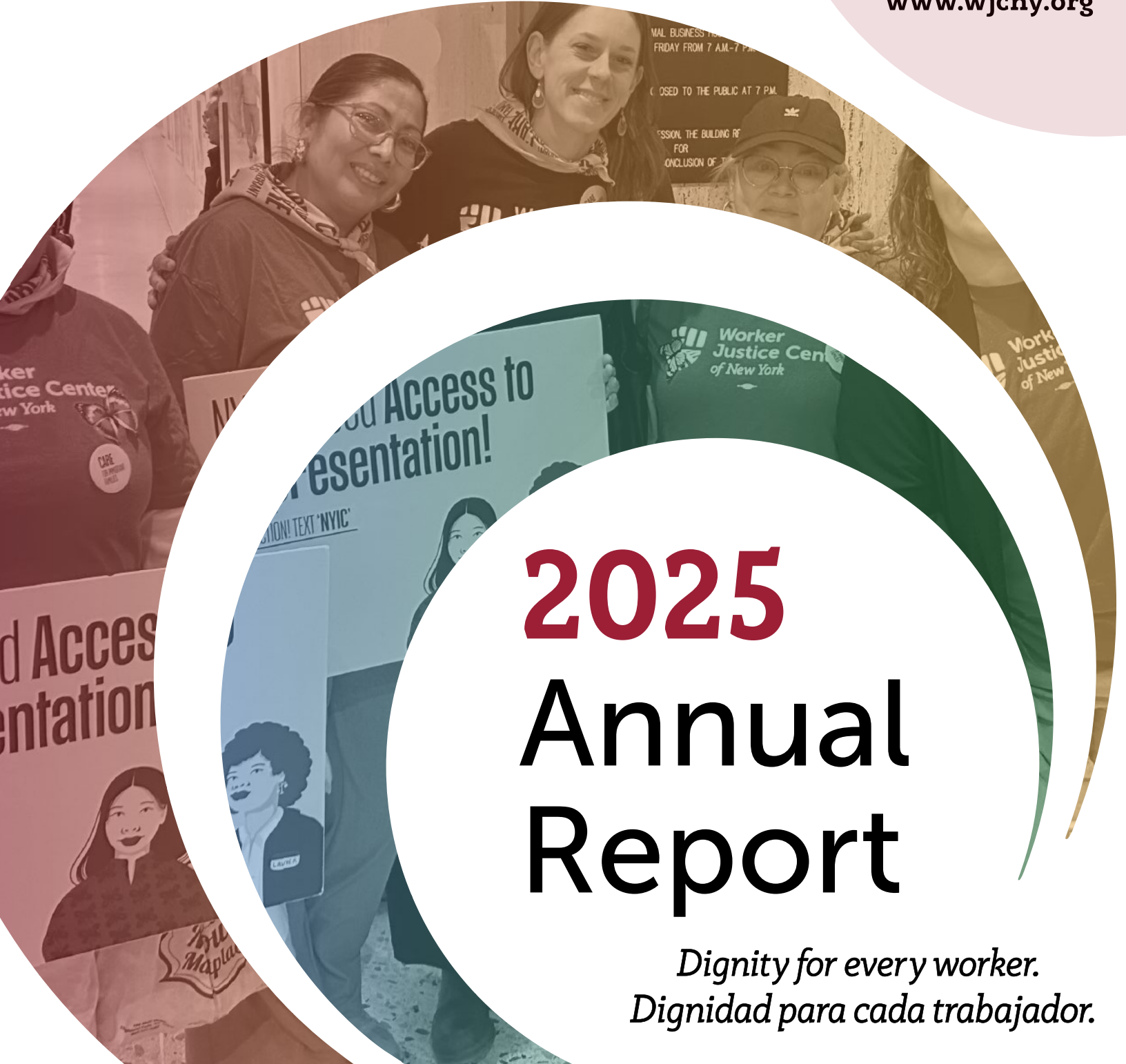
**Centro de Justicia
para Trabajadores**
de Nueva York

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1187 Culver Road
Rochester, NY 14609

Kingston Office
9 Main Street
Kingston, NY 12401

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2025 Annual Report

*Dignity for every worker.
Dignidad para cada trabajador.*

Message from WJCN Y's Board Chair

To Our Supportive Community:

The Worker Justice Center of New York provides a unique combination of legal support, advocacy and direct service to low-wage, primarily immigrant workers. Our relevance has sadly increased even as the ground shifts and funding becomes less secure. The good news is that WJCN Y is as strong as ever and ready to face new challenges. This report illustrates the breadth of our work and the dedication of the staff. It demonstrates how meaningful victories are still possible when the tools of engagement are deployed by skilled lawyers and experienced advocates working in collaboration across the state.

As the Board Chair, I know all this. Still, I learn even more when I hear about the organization from those outside it. It happens frequently in the course of my other work, when meeting with legal advocacy and community-based organizations. Most strikingly, I was interviewing recent migrants for one of those organizations, when a worker described what sounded like wage theft. The lawyer said we would need to refer them to the Workers Justice Center, but when she said the name, it turned out the worker already knew it. He shared his phone and showed us the extraordinarily detailed exchange with our Director of Outreach, explaining exactly the steps he could take. It is these experiences happening all over the state that attest to the significant place that WJCN Y occupies in the firmament of people and organizations fighting for the rights of migrant workers.

None of this would be possible without the extraordinary work of our Executive Director, Alaina Varvaloucas, our leadership team and unionized staff. Alaina took over in 2024 from our deservedly celebrated former Executive Director, Lew Papenfuse, who came out of retirement during a time of leadership transition; Alaina has led the organization to further stability, garnering the enthusiastic support of staff and the broader migrant rights community. This, coupled with the expansion of our Board to include dynamic new members with experience in fundraising, labor and immigrant rights, ensures WJCN Y will be here for many years to come.

Peter Rosenblum

Chair of the Board of Worker Justice Center of New York
Professor of International Law & Human Rights at Bard College



Mission

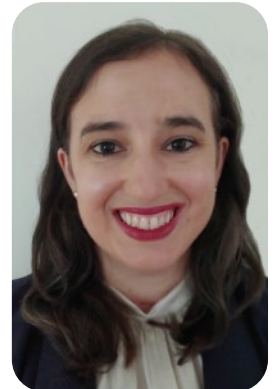
WJCN Y pursues justice for those denied human rights with a focus on agricultural and other low-wage workers, through legal representation, community empowerment, and advocacy for institutional change.



Message from WJCNY's Executive Director

To the Worker Justice Center Community:

I am honored to present the 2025 Annual Report for the Worker Justice Center of New York. In a year of unprecedented, often unimaginable challenges, it is easy to feel overwhelmed and powerless. We watch neighbors, both near and far, actively being targeted, and each day's headlines seem to reveal yet another atrocity to defend against. Yet it is precisely our dedication to the pursuit of justice which fuels our commitment to this work.



The cruelty enacted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is not new, but the growing boldness of its actions threatens the integrity of this nation. Like many states, New York witnessed its share of horrors this past year, from armed workplace raids to mounting reports of worker and human rights violations, including within detention facilities or via ICE encounters on the street. These dangers have been compounded by the open hostility of the current federal administration, whose decisions to freeze, cancel, or delay funding for thousands of social service programs have stretched an already overburdened system even further. Yet even in the midst of purposeful chaos, these crises have motivated countless New Yorkers to become community builders, advocates, and protectors, filling streets at rallies, organizing rapid-response efforts to shield their neighbors, redistributing resources, and amplifying voices which have long been ignored. We are proud to stand with long-time advocates and newcomers alike.

Our work often feels never ending, especially as these challenges compound the barriers facing workers and increase the demand for our services. Yet with a small but mighty team, we fought for justice alongside more than 5,000 workers, whether it was our Outreach team providing worker rights information to all corners of the state; our Legal team working with people to pursue justice when their rights were violated; our Human Trafficking team accompanying people on their path to self-determination; or our Advocacy team equipping elected officials across the state with the insight and solutions needed to address the challenges facing New Yorkers. As Executive Director, I have seen every member of our staff, whether they joined us this year or 26 years ago, demonstrate a resilience vital to our success in reaching workers across New York State. I am proud to be part of an organization that stands strong for every worker and immigrant in our New York communities, and I am deeply grateful to every supporter who recognizes the urgency of this work and chooses, time and again, to stand with us.

Alaina Varvaloucas

Executive Director of Worker Justice Center of New York



Vision

We envision a just society where every worker commands respect, fair compensation, safe working conditions, and freedom from violence and coercion.



Welcome to WJCN



Justice Within Reach

We premiered Justice Within Reach, a series of short films sharing the stories of three immigrant workers who faced experiences with labor abuse, including discrimination, harassment, and trafficking, and how WJCN worked with them as they came forward to demand justice.

The series, created by documentary filmmaker Jon Bowermaster and Oceans 8 Films, premiered virtually over the summer and also opened for the documentary "A Thousand Pines" in the Labor Film Series shown at the Dryden Theater in Rochester, New York in September.

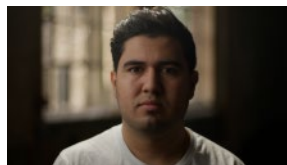


Scan to watch the videos.



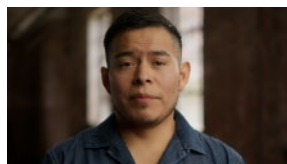
"I filed this lawsuit to be an example, to show other women and men that you don't have to be afraid to speak up if you are being abused or disrespected."

-Yesenia



"Through this experience, I learned that all workers have rights, no matter where we come from."

-Elvis



"I hope that sharing my story helps prevent others from experiencing the same type of abuse and exploitation."

-Sergio

Legal

893

cases worked
on in 2025

1,705

people benefited
from legal services

496

cases closed
in 2025

Achieved **\$757,000** in monetary benefits,
such as unpaid wages/damages for workers

Class Action

WJCNY's legal team believes that impact is achieved both through impact litigation and direct representation on behalf of workers. In 2020, WJCNY filed suit against the private, for-profit company Akima Global Services, which operates the Buffalo Federal Detention Center in Batavia, NY, where many immigrants are held while their immigration cases make their way through the system. The suit alleges forced labor and wage theft from detained immigrant workers making a max of \$1 per day--no matter how many hours they worked. WJCNY, along with co-counsel Kaufman Lieb Lebowitz & Frick LLP, successfully defeated a summary judgment motion and secured class certification in March 2025, allowing our lawsuit to cover thousands of other detained immigrant workers who worked in the \$1/day program.



Wage Theft case

In 2025, WJCNY received reports from hundreds of low-wage workers around the state whose wages were being stolen by their employers. In one case, WJCNY recovered \$500,000 for two restaurant workers to resolve claims involving unpaid wages and discrimination. Both long-time employees alleged overtime and spread-of-hours violations, and one also raised minimum-wage and age-discrimination claims. As part of the settlement, the employer agreed to post required Labor Law and antidiscrimination notices in the appropriate languages where all employees can see them.

Human Rights case

Aside from wage theft, labor trafficking, and health and safety violations, workers in New York often deal with discrimination, sexual harassment, and assaults. In one matter, WJCNY reached a resolution on behalf of a 68-year-old female farmworker in upstate New York who alleged sexual harassment and gender and age discrimination by her direct supervisor, even after she reported the misconduct to her employer. Her claims included enduring repeated derogatory comments about her age and gender as well as unwanted propositions for sex. WJCNY filed her case with the New York State Division of Human Rights and fought her case for over two years.

Advocacy

2025 NYS Budget & Legislative Priorities

CARE for Immigrant Families

CARE4IF advocates to establish a right to counsel in immigration court; invest in the capacity expansion of immigrant legal services; and invest in legal services for the Office for New Americans.

EmPIRE Worker Protection Act

EmPIRE would expand labor law enforcement by allowing affected employees, whistleblowers, and labor organizations to recover civil penalties for labor law violations.

Good Food NY

The Good Food NY campaign encourages public institutions to buy food in ways that strengthen local economies, protect workers, support environmental sustainability, and promote community health rather than being required to choose the lowest bidder.

New York for All

NY4ALL would prohibit state and local officers from colluding with ICE officers; ensure people in custody are informed of their rights; and prohibit ICE from entering non-public properties.

Unemployment Bridge Program

UBP proposes to extend unemployment compensation to workers, such as farmworkers and other low-wage workers, who have been historically excluded from receiving unemployment insurance.



EmPIRE Lobby Day | June 4th



Unemployment Bridge Program | February 25th

Rochester Living Wage Campaign

Rochester's Living Wage Campaign is a local movement working to ensure Rochester residents earn a living wage to meet basic living costs in the city. With over one-third of residents living in poverty, a minimum wage raise to \$23/hour would help families keep up with the cost of rent, groceries, and utility bills. Learn more and help us grow the Living Wage Coalition by scanning the QR code.



Rochester Living Wage Campaign | August 5th

ROXANA SIACA
CAMPAIGN ORGANIZER, JUSTICE CENTER OF NEW YORK

NEWS AT 11

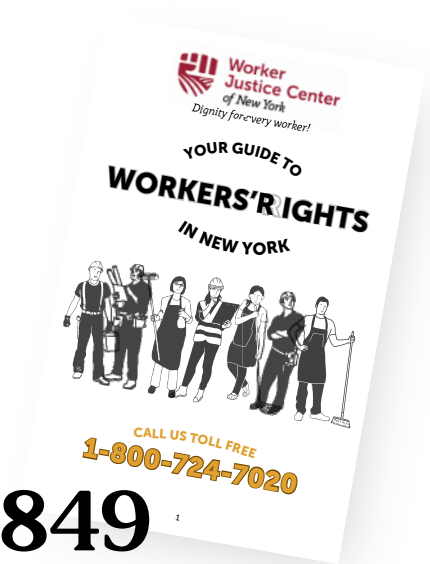


Outreach & Education

5,720
total people
reached

4,409
low-wage workers

42%
were farmworkers
32% had H-2A visas



596
service providers

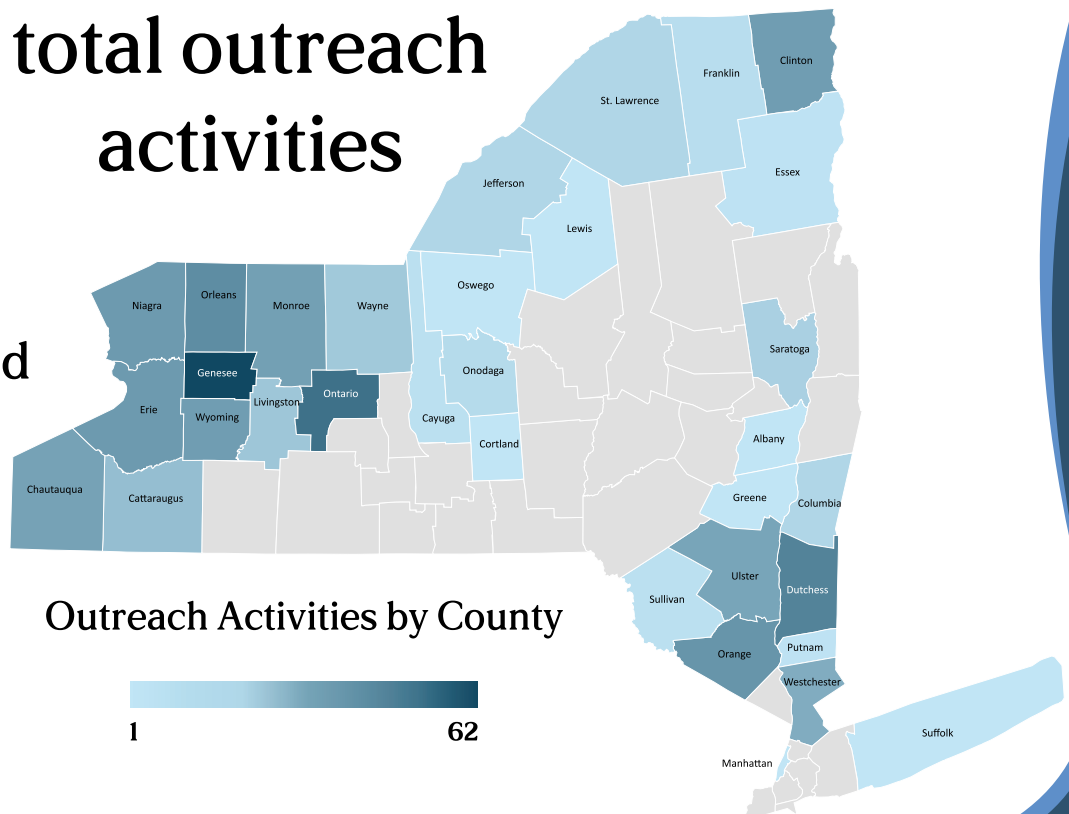
5,849
KYR booklets distributed
+ over 9,000 additional materials

358
community
members

538
total outreach
activities

34
counties reached

400
visits to
farmworker
homes &
labor camps

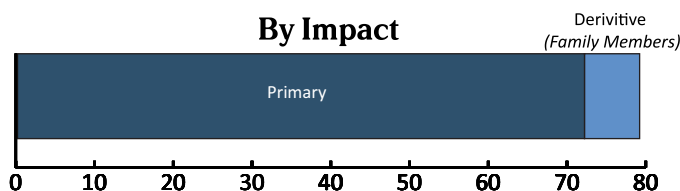
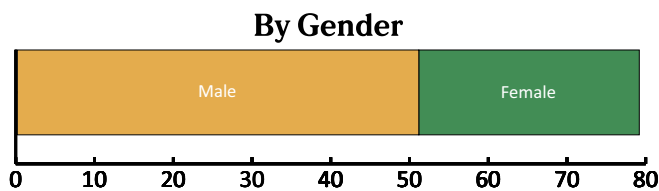
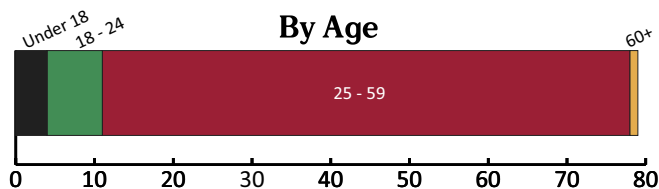


Anti-Human Trafficking

Worked with
72
human trafficking victims
+ **7** family members,
and opened **12** new
cases in 2025

Client Demographics

There are many myths about who is likely to become a victim of trafficking. To bring awareness, we have shared a few demographic data points gathered from people we worked with this past year.



By Country

Australia, Bolivia, Canada, Columbia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Kenya, Laos, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, Suriname, Venezuela

Provided:
10 people
with legal support for immigration
assistance

Accompaniment & advocacy to
19 people
attending law enforcement
interviews

Additional legal advice or
counsel to people
194 times

Technical assistance, trainings,
and/or consultations to
100 professionals
in law enforcement and
service provision agencies

Moving Forward

In 2025, we connected
11 human trafficking survivors
with labor unions to gain stable employment,
ensuring they were employed in safe working
conditions, fair wages, and supportive
workplace protections. This strategy not only
provided an opportunity for them to apply
their professional skills and earn income for
themselves and their families, it also reduced
their risk of being re-victimized.

WJCNY Board



Youth in Action | May 3rd



Jim Schmidt Community Solidarity Award
December 11th

Peter Rosenblum
Chair

Erin Flynn Casey
Vice Chair

Sandy Cuéllar Oxford
Secretary

Eric Binazeski
Treasurer

Milan Bhatt

Ed Felton

Janet Rolón Fry

Jason Parkin

Jeff Scales

Laura Rodriguez

Lolo Stone

Yolanda Villa

Linda Donahue (2025)

Ken Armes (2025)



May Day Worker Rights Rally | May 1st



EmPIRE Lobby Day | February 4th

WJCNY Staff

Alaina Evelyn Varvaloucas
Executive Director

Emma Kreyche
Director of Advocacy, Outreach, & Education

Pablo Leon
Worker Rights Advocate

Gabriel Marcano
Human Trafficking Coordinator

Sophia Allie Martinez
Paralegal

Eline Martinez
Worker Rights Advocate

Mary McConnell
Grants & Development Coordinator

Wendy Mejía-Ochoa
Paralegal Coordinator

Marí Perales Sánchez
Skadden Legal Fellow

Olivia Post-Rich
Sr. Labor & Employment Attorney

Sonia Rivera
Senior Administrative Assistant

Alana Roth
Staff Attorney

Renán Salgado
Human Trafficking Director

Roxana Siaca
Campaign Organizer

Will Torres
Administrative Assistant

Katie Wock
Director of Communications & Development

Erin Young
Director of Labor Relations & HR

Aylin Aguilar
Human Trafficking Specialist

Cristina Brito
Sr. Labor & Employment Attorney

Cecilia Cortina Segovia
Paralegal

Julie Dragonetti
Outreach & Education Coordinator

Gloribell Figueroa
Worker Rights Advocate

Todd Humphrey
Director of Finance & Administration

Maureen Hussain
Legal Director

Malcolm Kim
Immigration Attorney

Financial

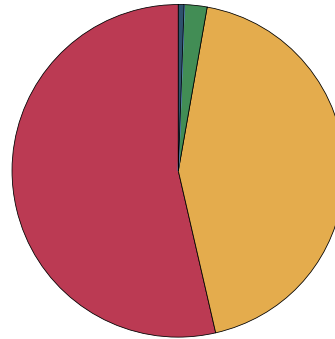
2024: Form 990



Scan to visit our Candid (Guidestar) profile.

Revenue

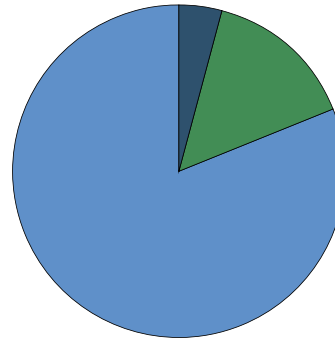
| | | |
|-------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Government Grants | \$ | 1,258,219 |
| Contributions | \$ | 1,020,729 |
| Program Services | \$ | 51,775 |
| Investments | \$ | 297 |
| Other | \$ | 16,175 |
| Total | \$ | 2,347,195 |



- 54% Government Grants
- 43% Contributions
- 2% Program Services
- .01% Investments
- 1% Other

Expenses

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Program Services | \$ | 1,931,258 |
| Administration | \$ | 350,796 |
| Fundraising/Other | \$ | 99,493 |
| Total | \$ | 2,381,547 |



- 81% Program Services
- 15% Administration
- 4% Fundraising/Other



Rise Up!: Women in Motion

For over three years, this participant-led leadership program has fostered community, offered workshops and trainings to build knowledge, and provided support



Care for Immigrant Families Rally | March 24th

to women, many of them immigrants, working in agricultural and other low-wage industries. In 2025, our cohorts in Monroe and Ulster counties engaged 21 women.



Anti-ICE Rally | February 3rd

Funders

Office of Court Administration
Judiciary Civil Legal Services (OCA)
Interest on Lawyer Account (IOLA)
Office for Victims of Crime of the
Department of Justice (OVC)
Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS)
Office of Victim Services:
Victims of Crime Act (OVS)
Ascienzo Family Foundation
Berkshire Taconic
Clif Family Foundation
Columbia County Fund (Berkshire
Taconic Community Foundation)
Dutchess County Fund (Community
Foundations of the Hudson Valley)
Dyson Foundation
Engage NY
Food Chain Workers Alliance
Further Justice Foundation
Greater Rochester Health Foundation
Hispanic Federation
Impact Fund

Jeannette E. Schlobach Fund Grant (CFHV)
Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation
Kimelman Family Foundation
Make the Road New York
Monroe County Bar Association Foundation
NED Corp Fund (BTCF)
Neighborhood Funders Group
The New York Community Trust/
Westchester Community Foundation
New York Immigration Coalition
North Star Fund
NoVo Foundation
New York State Bar Foundation
Polaris, Nonechka Project
Popular Democracy
Ralph E. Ogden Foundation
Rochester Area Community Foundation
Sisters of St. Joseph
Skadden Foundation
United Way of the Finger Lakes
United Way of Ulster County
University of Rochester Health Sciences

We are also deeply grateful to the many anonymous Donor-Advised Fund partners, whose generosity strengthens our mission and expands our impact.



Donors

Thank you for your generosity and for standing with us when it matters most. While grants and foundations fund much of our program work, the glue that holds us together and connects us to others is often the hardest to fund, yet more critical than ever as many nonprofit organizations face cuts. Your donations make a massive difference in enabling us to work at our fullest capacity. Thank you for ensuring we can bring resources to people across the state, affirming every worker deserves dignity.

Thank you to all our supporters!

Our Work Continues

As we consider the future, we invite you to continue standing with the Worker Justice Center of New York in 2026 to build a stronger, more resilient community where every worker is treated with dignity.

Get Involved!

- **Advocate alongside us**
- **Join us for community events**
- **Sign up for our newsletters:**
www.wjcny.org/get_updates
- **Follow us on social media**



Make a Donation!



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