

CIWO at Rutgers University’s School of Management and Labor Relations (SMLR) seeks to generate and disseminate new ideas, strategies, and programs; capture, research, and highlight lessons from ongoing experimentation; and organize gatherings where key leaders are brought together across economic justice organizations and networks. CIWO strives to serve as a launching pad for new strategies in community and labor organizing and to provide support to broader movements for racial and economic justice.

The Center is pleased to provide a brief summary of our major gatherings and learning sessions over the past month. We understand that these are particularly challenging times and are grateful for the support we receive from Rutgers SMLR, national and local labor unions, worker centers, individual donors, and foundations, to continue serving as a strategic convener for this critical work.

CONVENING ON STATE AND LOCAL LABOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

March 6-7, 2017

Open Society Foundation, NYC

We were the main convener, in partnership with the Open Society Foundation and the National Employment Law Project (with support from the Surdna and Ford Foundations) of a strategy session on building effective and aggressive labor law enforcement at the state and local level, which will be critical in coming years given the changes at the federal level.



The goals of the convening were to:

- share promising proactive and strategic approaches that have been used in federal, state and local enforcement to date, and consider how to promote these more among a broader community of state and local agencies;
- discuss best practices in building enforcement partnerships between government agencies and NGOs;
- brainstorm about how to bring new government enforcement players into the labor enforcement field; and
- consider how best to address the upcoming re-linkage of federal labor and immigration enforcement.

Attendees included over 70 leaders of state and local enforcement agencies, legal strategists, policy experts, foundation executives and organizers, as well as, former federal agency officials from across the country. Some of the organizations represented included: Interfaith Worker Justice, UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research & Education, Service Employees International Union, Center for Popular Democracy, Economic Policy Institute, National Employment Law Project, Workers Defense Project, National Immigration Law Center, ARISE Chicago, AFL-CIO, Jobs with Justice, NY State Department of Labor, Arkansas Department of Labor, and Office of the Attorney General of Massachusetts, among others.



Feedback throughout the two-day convening highlighted the importance of the gathering:



“Great two days. Lots of useful discussion among a great set of participants. Well done.”
David Weil, former Wage and Hour Administrator, US DOL

“I got many ideas about campaigns, strategies, and a view of the field as a whole. Also spent time with colleagues, which was very valuable.”
Laura Barrett, Executive Director, Interfaith Worker Justice

You brought together such an amazing and inspiring group of people and provided space to really talk—thank you!!!...I look forward to participating in the follow-up.”
Amy Sugimori, Director of Policy & Legislation, SEIU Local 32BJ

BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD – RACIAL JUSTICE

March 29-31, 2017

Tommy Douglas Conference Center, Silver Spring, MD

The Bargaining for the Common Good (BCG) – Racial Justice conference was co-sponsored by the Action Center on Race and the Economy (ACRE), Kalmanovitz Institute for Labor and the Working Poor at Georgetown University, and CIWO at Rutgers SMLR. The event brought together over 120 participants from national and local labor unions, worker centers, racial and social justice organizations, and other partners from across the country. The organizations represented included: AFL-CIO, AFSCME, AFT, NEA, SEIU, Jobs with Justice, BYP100, Ohio Organizing Collaborative, Orange County CTA, Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses & Allied Professionals (PASNAP), Portland Association of Teachers, POWER-LA, Saint Paul Federation of Teachers, Neighborhoods Organizing for Change (NOC), UCS/Cornell Worker Institute, University of California San Diego, and Youth United for Change, among many others.



The program was developed with extensive collaboration among the steering committee over several months, which included representatives from diverse organizations. Based on feedback from prior BCG gatherings, the conference focused on three main goals:

- Develop an understanding of Bargaining for the Common Good strategy and how it provides opportunities to expand bargaining campaigns to fight for racial justice.

- Bring together unions, racial justice organizations, worker centers, community groups to connect with each other through a common analysis of the moment.
- Plan and implement innovative strategies that broaden worker bargaining to include racial justice demands.

The gathering included a keynote address by Mary Cathryn Ricker, Executive Vice President, AFT; a case study of the race and equity institute led by the Seattle Teachers Association; and a panel on Race in the Labor Movement which featured: Matthew Luskin (Chicago Teachers Union), Darlene Lombos (Community Labor United), Carlos Jimenez (DC Labor Federation), and Kyra Greene (Center for Policy Initiatives). There was also time devoted to power mapping, local strategy planning, and developing bargaining demands.



COLLABORATIONS WITH THE CENTER ON LAW AND SOCIAL POLICY (CLASP)

February 7 and April 3, 2017

Learning Session/Webinar

CIWO has also developed a partnership with the Center on Law and Social Policy (CLASP) to build an ongoing community of learning and practice among state and local agencies that are in charge of enforcing state and local minimum wage and paid sick and safe time laws, as well as, key organizational allies. CLASP had been hosting webinars, conference calls, and convenings focused on paid sick days enforcement, and CIWO had been working with many state and local agencies on wage and hour enforcement. We were excited to bring these two communities together to learn from one another and share best practices.



Our first peer-to-peer learning session, on February 7, focused on how to protect vulnerable workers who file complaints from retaliation by their employers and how to respond when such retaliation occurs. For example,

agencies can choose to do more proactive enforcement using employer documents instead of worker testimony. In particular, we focused on the tools agencies can use to protect immigrant workers.

The webinar presenters were Terri Gerstein, former labor bureau chief at the New York State Attorney General's Office, and currently an Open Society Foundations Leadership in Government Fellow and Jessie Hahn, labor and employment policy attorney at the National Immigration Law Center (NILC).

There were over 90 participants from 18 cities and counties, 17 states, 3 Canadian provinces and 12 advocacy and research organizations represented in the webinar.

Feedback from many participants stressed the timeliness and importance of the webinar:

"Thank you both so much for preparing and hosting the webinar this afternoon! Very well done and greatly appreciated! You even ended precisely on time!"

"For us in Minneapolis, I noticed that a local workers' rights center (CTUL) and community organizers were on the call. I happen to have a meeting scheduled with them tomorrow. Your webinar today will now help us operate with a common base knowledge, expectations, goals, and vocabulary...Also, I love the webinar format. I think it works well and is very convenient for participants (which is key)."

"The emphasis on when and how to negotiate with employers/"bad actors" is extremely practical and helpful. I will remember and practice quickly calling employers and negotiating for reinstatement of workers, where appropriate."

Our April 3, webinar focused intake procedures and policies and creating a triage system, in the context of strengthening agencies' ability to engage in strategic enforcement. Intake procedures and policies have a significant impact on workers' experiences filing complaints, as well as, the quality of information agencies are able to collect. This information is also crucial for triaging--sorting complaints into different treatment categories on the basis of:

- Severity of the offense (including child labor or other serious violations, number of workers affected, whether the complainant is still employed at the firm and the issue is ongoing, and risk of retaliation);
- Employer industry, particularly for those known to have high levels of violations; and
- Existence of previous offenses.

Creating a triage system, including developing criteria for placing complaints on a spectrum between conciliations and company-wide investigations, is extremely challenging. But it is essential for agencies to be able to maximize their limited resources and prioritize enforcement in problem industries. On the webinar, participants heard from speakers from several local and state enforcement agencies—including Julie Su, California Commissioner of Labor, Jenn Round, Seattle Office of Labor Standards, Steven Kelly, Deputy Director of the New York City Office of Labor Policy and Standards, as well as, Laura Fortman, former deputy administrator of the federal Wage and Hour Division and Janice Fine, to learn about the new approaches to intake and triage they are developing.

The webinar included 105 participants from 18 cities and counties, 17 states, 3 Canadian provinces and 12 advocacy and research organizations.

In addition to these 3 events, Prof. Janice Fine has been consulting with many of the newly emergent local labor standards agencies and partner organizations across the country, including Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles County, Santa Clara County, Washington DC, Chicago, New York City, and Minneapolis and working with the national organization of state departments of labor, the Interstate Labor Standards Association (ILSA) on a set of panels for their annual meeting this summer in Little Rock, Arkansas. This summer she will be traveling to work with agencies and key organizations in California, Washington State, New Mexico, Arizona and Minnesota.

MID-ATLANTIC LABOR LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE (MALLI)

March 20-24, 2017

Cacapon State Park and Resort, Berkeley Springs, WV

The first MALLI retreat focused on **Strengthening Individual Leadership** and included 30 participants from labor union and partner organizations from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, West Virginia, Maryland/DC, and Delaware. This new, year-long program was created by the National AFL-CIO. And the MALLI curriculum is a joint effort of a group of labor education programs with long and strong ties to the labor movement: Penn State University, Rutgers University/LEARN and CIWO, West Virginia University, and Cornell University.



MALLI seeks to bring labor leaders and allied organization leaders who have significant leadership responsibilities together in order to:

- create a space for relationship building and problem-solving around organizational effectiveness, movement building, and personal leadership skills;
- explore more effective ways for the labor movement to meet the diverse and serious challenges we face today;
- engage in strategic conversations about how to build a powerful workers' movement for the 21st century

Two additional retreats are scheduled for June 2017, at Penn State University focused on **Leading & Transforming Your Organization**, and the final retreat will be held in September 2017, near Stockton University in New Jersey highlighting the importance of **Building a Dynamic & Inclusive Movement**.

Other News

We are happy to be the recipients of prestigious **Berger-Marks Foundation** Legacy Gift and Award Program. The Center was awarded a \$668,000 Legacy Gift (as part of a \$1.3 million joint project with the Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor at Georgetown University) and a second Berger-Marks Foundation \$175,000 awards program gift. More details about the WILL Empower program and a formal announcement will be made in the coming months.

CIWO recently hired a new Senior Program Administrator, Ms. **Amari Verástegui**, who joined the team on March 1. Ms. Verástegui has worked at Rutgers for over 15 years and has extensive experience in grants management, adult education, conference facilitation, Spanish interpretation and translation, and strategic planning. Previously, Amari worked at the School of Communication and Information, the Center for Women's Global Leadership, and the Statewide Systemic Initiative (NJ SSI) and has focused most of her career on women's rights and social justice issues, as well, as K-12 educational reform.

CIWO will host our next gathering, **Building the Bench and Membership Building Joint Convening - Activism, Resistance, and Sustainability**, from August 7-9, in Washington, DC. The three-day session will focus on retooling our organizations and networks to be more flexible; identifying strategies for engaging and welcoming millions of new activists; experimenting with distributed leadership and membership building models that place more responsibility in the hands of leaders, and other topics.