

WORKSAFE
IMPACT
REPORT
2024



INTRO



Hello friends and allies!

This has been an exciting year! We've seen some of the seeds we've been planting for years begin to come to fruition (**the Black Worker Initiative, the Indoor Heat Standard, growing protections for Domestic Workers**), worked on new projects with exciting and promising results (**the Youth Listening Summit, collaborations with Prison Justice orgs**) and coalesced into a **team that feels incredibly aligned and joyful.**

Often by this time of year, things have quieted some, and much of the work turns introspective and reflective, but we're already deep in preparations for projects and ideas for 2025, some of which we'll be able to share with you in the early months of the new year!

One thing that hasn't changed is that both the **threats and opportunities facing workers continue to grow**, and the communities and organizations tasked with facing down the threats and seizing the opportunities continue to become more interwoven, intentional, strategic and motivated.

We invite you to **join us in taking a breath** to celebrate the things we've accomplished, and to reflect with us on how to keep rising to the fresh challenges of the day to day.

In solidarity,

Amira, AnaStacia, Benita, Cerina, Jora, Karín, Leonard, Orai, Rachel, and Stephen

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN & MISSION

Mission: Preventing injury, illness, and death by bringing justice to the workplace

Vision: A world where workers and their communities are safe and healthy

Values:

- We believe that **all workers** deserve a safe and healthy workplace
- We know that there is **dignity** in all work and all workers deserve respect
- We demand that workers have **equal access to justice** in the workplace
- We center the experiences of vulnerable workers, including low-wage and immigrant workers
- We seek worker-centered and community-based solutions for protecting health and safety
- We promote a collaborative, movement-building approach to action and advocacy



INTERSECTION OF CLIMATE JUSTICE



CALIFORNIA ENACTS NATION-LEADING HEAT PROTECTIONS FOR ALL WORKERS

California has now enacted **groundbreaking protections for indoor workers from excessive heat** on the job. At its June meeting, the **Standards Board voted unanimously to approve the new rule and it went into effect almost immediately, on July 23.**

California employers with workplaces that reach 82 degrees must now have a Heat Illness Prevention Plan that "must be specific and customized to the employer's operations" and workers are to be trained on the plan. Cool down areas and cold drinking water must be provided and easy to access during working hours. When temperatures reach 87 degrees, employers must take additional steps to protect workers from the dangers of high heat, including implementing a hierarchy of control measures to avoid or reduce the heat and administrative controls to minimize the risk of their workers suffering heat illness.

We celebrate this new standard while also expressing our disappointment at the last minute exclusion for Corrections facilities. It is one of our top priorities to secure progress on a Corrections standard in 2025.

To this end, in addition to working with Climate Resolve and the Adrienne Arsht-Rockefeller Foundation Resilience Center to advance heat protections for workers, we have also **joined forces with criminal justice reform advocates Legal Services for Prisoners with Children (LSPC) to secure a heat standard for California's Corrections facilities**, which were exempted last minute from the general industry Indoor Heat Standard.

**ALL WORKPLACES THAT REACH
82 DEGREES OR ABOVE
MUST HAVE A HEAT ILLNESS PREVENTION PLAN
CUSTOMIZED TO OPERATIONS**

MOVEMENT BUILDING



BLACK WORKER OUTREACH

We continued to build out the Black Worker Initiative (BWI) in 2024 with the addition of a new team member, **Leonard Brown**, and by connecting to community through events like the Black Joy Parade in February, where the outreach team tabled alongside Black Cultural Zone. In addition, Labor Occupational Health Program at University of California, Berkeley (LOHP) has been an integral partner in the Black Worker Initiative. In 2024, **Monique Hosein** from LOHP, who has extensive experience in project management and curriculum development, helped develop successful outreach and education with Worksafe staff. We will continue our partnership in 2025.

THE CALIFORNIA COALITION FOR WORKER POWER WORKER ASSEMBLY

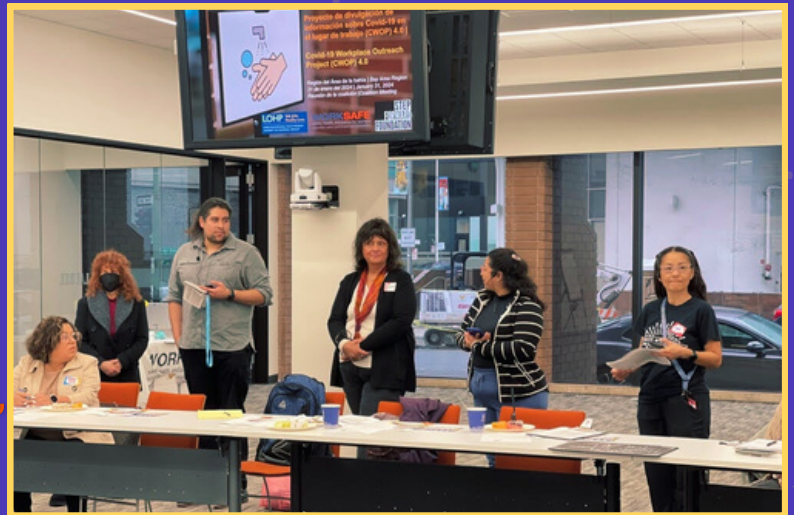


Workers, advocates and politicians from across the entire state came together to celebrate victories, discuss policy and strategy, and share resources. **It was an epic and inspiring gathering.**

JOYFUL GATHERINGS

CALIFORNIA WORKER OUTREACH CONVENINGS

Our work with the **California Worker Outreach Project (CWOP)** continued in 2024. We, along with our partner, Step Forward, led by Board Member, Ruth Silver-Taube, serve as the Co-Regional Leads for the Bay Area. We kicked off the year with a convening which gathered sixteen organizations, and rounded out the year with another in October. **These in-person retreats were valuable opportunities for training, community-building and skillshare**, and we will likely continue them into the following year.



The effectiveness of CWOP is well documented in helping workers know and access their rights. We look forward to continuing this good work in the coming years.



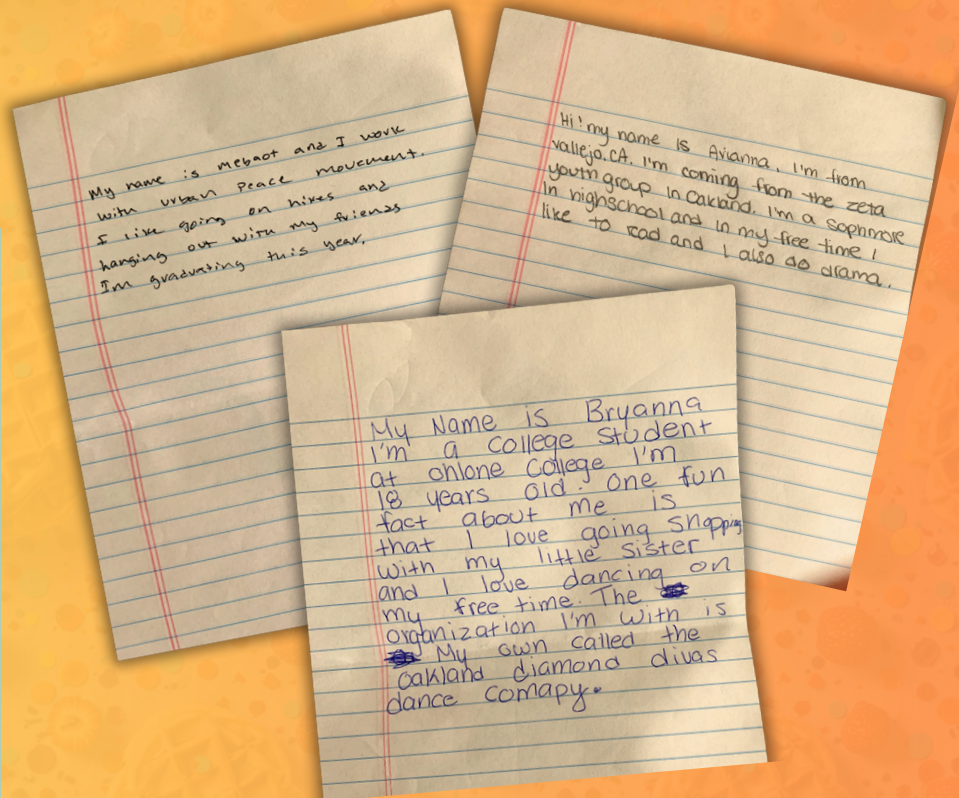
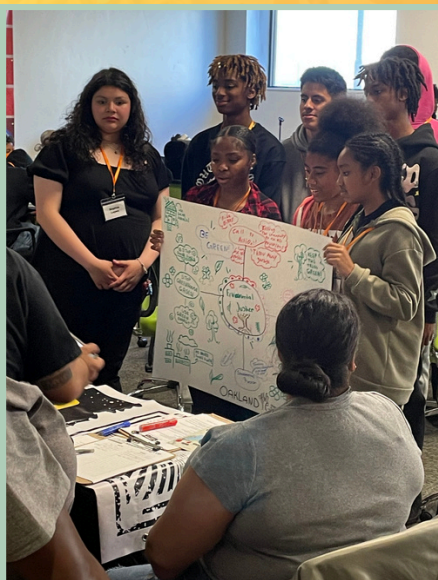
YOUTH LISTENING SUMMIT

Click text above for more info ^

This incredible event was a first for Worksafe, bringing Oakland youth together with local organizations to learn, share, and even prepare presentations for local elected representatives and state officials. Over 100 young people attended our hours-long event on April 28th, which featured everything from waffles and vendors to appearances by the California Labor Commissioner and the head of Cal/OSHA.



Jora pauses for a photo with YLS attendees and Oakland City Councilmember, Carroll Fife, Council President, Nikki Fortunato Bas, a representative from Assemblymember, Mia Bonta's office, and Chief of Cal OSHA, Debra Lee, and the Labor Commissioner, Lilia Garcia-Brower, on Zoom



OUR LEGAL WORK THIS YEAR

IMPACT LITIGATION AND LEGAL ASSISTANCE



50

**Direct Technical Assistance to:
Organizations, Worker Centers, Qualified Legal Services Projects and Individuals**

Occupational Safety and Health Justice Highlights:

Worksafe assisted workers represented by a Qualified Legal Services Project in an occupational health and safety complaint against a popular retailer in San Francisco. **The employer was cited and the employer provided proof of purchase that they bought the necessary PPE they failed to have that was leading to unsafe work conditions.** Worksafe continues to assist on retaliation issues that a worker has faced with this employer.

Worksafe closed out a case from 2020 where our attorneys provided legal support and consultation to a Qualified Legal Services Project and workers on an occupational safety and health complaint and the subsequent appeals process. **In March 2020, before the shelter-in-place order, California's Occupational Safety and Health agency (Cal/OSHA) cited this Oakland-based janitorial employer \$40,000 in response to a complaint Worksafe filed on behalf of the workers.** The janitorial employer appealed the citation, and Worksafe preserved the interests of the workers by participating in the appeals process through third party status. The case finally settled for \$23,500. Most serious citations remain on this Employer's records through Worksafe's negotiations. This creates a record for the Employer, which would allow Cal/OSHA to do a more in-depth investigation if workers were experiencing unsafe conditions with this same employer, and result in higher and willful citations if the same unsafe conditions exist.

JUSTICE FOR IMMIGRANT WORKERS IN DETENTION

Workers in detention successfully exercise their health and safety rights and obtain a statement of interest to protect them from immigration threats and retaliation with Worksafe.

Worksafe and Collaborative for Immigrant Justice (CCIJ) continue to fight for protections for detained workers. As we reported last year, Cal/OSHA has found willful and serious violations by the private detention company GEO Group, and issued fines of almost \$105,000. **The workers performed essential cleaning and other duties in 8-hour shifts in unsafe conditions,** for which [they were paid only \\$1 per day](#), an additional injustice that led dozens of them to [launch a strike and sue the company](#). There were multiple COVID-19 outbreaks at the facility, both before and after the penalty was issued. The worker-detainees also suffered retaliation as a result - CCIJ is representing a worker on a health and safety retaliation claim.

We continue to litigate the case in administrative proceedings, [as reported here by Bloomberg](#). The OSH Appeals Board (OSHAB) requested supplemental briefing on Worksafe's position that our clients are employees who are civilly detained and are not prisoners as defined by the state Labor Code.

Worksafe continues to fight for the detainee workers' rights to participate as third parties in the appeals process, which allows them to have a voice in the proceedings, even if those rights are not the same as being a full party to a proceeding. Worksafe has been strongly advocating for the complainants' right to participate anonymously in third party proceedings.

Worksafe is proud to have partnered with the ACLU who submitted an [amicus brief](#) in support of our position that detained workers are not prisoners as defined by the state Labor Code and sharing experiences of how detained individuals face heightened risks of retaliation, which is why anonymous participation is necessary.

In June, Radio Bilingue requested that senior staff attorney, Karín Umfrey, and a previously detained individual participate in their live talk show, Línea Abierta, for a 20 minute segment, and the [segment](#) aired on June 18, 2024. Línea Abierta is the first and only Spanish-language news show broadcast nationally over the public radio satellite system. Hundreds of thousands of listeners tune in every week.

At the close of 2024, Worksafe submitted further briefing on why the law supports preserving confidentiality of complainants who come forward to participate in the appeals process. Due to the groundbreaking Statement of Interest that Cal/OSHA issued, CCIJ has applied for the Deferred Action for Labor Enforcement.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM TRAININGS & PRESENTATIONS

TRAININGS	DETAILS
Black Worker Outreach Trainings	Held in March, June, August, September, October, and December
Health and Safety Trainings Specialized topic: Natural Disasters	Multiple trainings for different audiences - including directly to workers in Communication Workers of America, to worker advocacy organizations, and for the Pro Bono Institute
Training in Spanish on Health and Safety Rights	Training worker center staff on how to provide support to workers
Training on Cultural Humility	Training legal organizations such as legal services support centers, qualified legal service providers, and more
Training on Rights of Immigrants in Detention and Advocating for a Statement of Interest	Training legal organizations such as legal services support centers, qualified legal service providers, and more
Training on new Workplace Violence Prevention Law, SB 553	Training legal organizations in Legal Aid Association of California on updates and changes to health and safety laws in California
Training at the American Bar Association's Annual Labor and Employment Law Conference	Training attorneys on union and employee participation in the Work and Missions of OSHA and State Departments of Labor including walkarounds



BWI Trainings in Oakland



At the ABA Labor & Employment Law Conference

WORKSAFE PROVIDES TRAINING ON MANY TOPICS. CONTACT US TO SEE HOW WE CAN HELP:

worksafe@worksafe.org

OUR POLICY ADVOCACY THIS YEAR

Worksafe is actively involved in and/or offers legal support to several important coalitions which protect and advance worker rights and well being, including the California Coalition for Worker Power (CCWP), the Coalition of Low-Wage and Immigrant Worker Advocates (CLIWA), the California Work & Family Coalition (CAWFC), the California Domestic Worker Coalition (CDWC), the Wildfire Resource Working Group (WRWG), and Safety Net 4 All.



Policy Advocacy with CCWP

LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES

With **CLIWA** and **CCWP**:

- Defending the Private Attorney General's Act
- Defending California Worker Outreach Project Funding

With **CAWFC**:

- Defeating the Taxpayer Deception Act with CAWFC
- Passing SB 1090, AB 2123, and AB 2499, which make Paid Family Leave, Safe Leave, and Disability Insurance stronger and easier to access.

With **CDWC**:

- Passing SB 1350, to bring California into compliance with Federal law and give the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) a clear mandate to protect the more than 175,000 domestic workers who work for homecare, cleaning, or nanny agencies



SB 1350 Lobby Day with CDWC

SB 1101

Prescribed Cultural Fires

This bill implements procedures for cultural and prescribed burns for preventing wildfires, with Pacific Forest Trust leading the efforts on the bill. The Wildfire Resources Working Group is a group of diverse stakeholders that meet together to find a common thread to support wildfire smoke initiatives.



IMPACT IN THE MEDIA

THE MACHINE GUARD

We published numerous blogs over the past year to help raise awareness of health and safety issues and ensure that workers are represented in conversations which tend to be dominated by employer-side law firms. **Please read and share with your networks!**

["It's Murderous": Reflections from the Trenches of the Social Justice War](#)

[Reparations and State Inaction](#)

[The Cal/OSHA Staffing Crisis: A Looming Challenge for Workplace Safety](#)

[Indoor Heat Standard Delayed by Administration](#)

[California Heat Protections: Update](#)

[Worker Rights and the Carceral System](#)

[Cal/OSHA Staffing Problems Persist-And So Do We](#)

CAL/OSHA STAFFING CRISIS

Over the last year, a great deal of [attention](#) has been brought to this very urgent and [yet longstanding](#) issue, thanks in part to the efforts of the Worksafe-led OSH Strategy Group. We have kept the spotlight on this unacceptable situation which imperils all of us who work in California.

Indoor Heat Standard Delayed By Administration

 The Machine Guard - a Blog of Worksafe · Follow
2 min read · Apr 8, 2024



By Stephen Knight

WORKSAFE IN THE NEWS

1. [Dying in the Fields as Temperatures Soar](#), **Inside Climate News**, 1/26/24
2. [California Nears Approving Nation's Toughest Lead Exposure Rules](#), **Bloomberg Law**, 2/14/24
3. [Newsom stays silent on Cal-OSHA staffing crisis as legislators and advocates call for action](#), **Sacramento Bee/AP**, 3/13/24
4. [California workers must wait even longer for indoor heat protections](#), **CalMatters**, 3/21/24
5. ['They Are at Risk': California Workers May Wait Longer for Heat-Illness Protections](#), **KQED News**, 3/22/24
6. [California wants to protect indoor workers from heat. That goal is now in limbo](#), **NPR/Wisconsin Public Radio; LAist**, 3/23/24
7. [California tries again to protect workers from indoor heat – except in prisons](#), **CalMatters**, 4/18/24
8. [Will Workers Be Protected from Extreme Heat on the Job?](#), **Marketplace Public Radio**, 6/3/24
9. [A workplace safety board bucked Gavin newsom. Now he's shaking it up](#), **CalMatters**, 6/11/24
10. [Silver Taube: An indoor workplace heat standard is long overdue](#), **San Jose Spotlight**, 6/13/24
11. [State board approves protections for hot workplaces](#), **LA Times/AP**, 6/20/24
12. [New rules will protect California workers from dangerous heat indoors](#), **NPR KQED**, 6/21/24
13. [California to become third state to mandate heat protections for indoor workers](#), **NBC News**, 6/21/24
14. [Staffing issues still plague the investigative unit at Cal-OSHA](#), **Sacramento Bee/AP**, 6/23/24
15. [New Heat Protection for CA Workers Excludes Prisons](#), **KPFA/Law and Disorder**, 6/26/24
16. [New workplace standards promise Bay Area fast food workers relief from scorching temperatures](#), **El Timpano**, 7/30/24
17. [Business Concerns Loom Over California's Indoor Worker Heat Rule](#), **Bloomberg Law**, 8/14/24
18. [Weeks after California's indoor heat standards took effect, workers still swelter](#), **LA Times/AP**, 8/29/24
19. [The Bee reported Cal/OSHA's understaffing endangered state workers. What's happened since?](#), **Sacramento Bee/AP**, 9/9/24
20. [Collective Care: In an overheating world, workers are learning to organize for their own protection](#), **Earth Island Journal**, 9/18/24
21. [Punching In: Su's Future at Labor Unclear Even if Harris Wins](#), **Bloomberg**, 11/4/24

BUILDING A JOYFUL TEAM

CERINA TALLEY-RAGSDALE

Cerina Talley-Ragsdale is the most recent addition to our staff, joining the team as Administrative Assistant just this November. Cerina was born in Alabama, with roots that spread across California, Alabama, and Texas, shaping her into the person she is today. She excelled in school, maintaining A/B honor roll, and found her love for teamwork on the softball field, where she first discovered the joy of being a supportive team player. Growing up, Cerina learned the importance of healthy communication, which became a core value she carries into every interaction. She has since dedicated herself to being a positive force for others, always sharing kindness and encouragement, knowing the impact a caring word can have on someone's day.

LEONARD BROWN

Worksafe is proud to support a worker leader for our Black Worker Initiative, Leonard Brown. Leonard has joined other worker leaders in National COSH's "We Rise Leadership Academy" and is embarking on a journey of worker advocacy. Leonard shares: "I am 59 years of age and I enjoy writing, sharing space and time with friends and family on my off days, and I truly like traveling and meeting new cultures and sampling different cuisines." Leonard's current employment entails cleaning, hospitality and safety. His work can be very rewarding and emotionally challenging at times due to the level of human suffering that he might encounter on a daily basis. "At first it was difficult to engage unhoused individuals and I often found myself looking away at so many either caught up in addiction or suffering from a mental disorder, but slowly I began to see and honor their humanity because everyone is deserving of love and respect."

BENITA GORDON

Benita Gordon was initially hired as our Administrative Coordinator in February of this year and by August was promoted to Operations Manager. Before joining Worksafe, Benita spent 15 years aiding the flow and function of companies in multiple sectors, including law firms, tech companies, medical specialists, hotel management and applied behavior analysis. Seeing the structure of these different companies provided broad firsthand insight into effective organization. Benita believes that by helping people see things from different perspectives, and teaching various organization techniques, she contributes not just to the individual but the establishment as whole, and offers some of the most effective ways to strengthen the foundation of organizations in order to enable rapid growth.

AZUCENA GARCIA-FERRO

Azucena Garcia-Ferro joined the Worksafe team in August on a part time basis as a Worker Advocate. She was born and raised in San Diego, CA to immigrant parents from Mexico. Azucena grew up in a low-income community, San Ysidro, and was raised by her mom. Her mom, Martha, who worked in the fast food industry and as a cleaner, is her strength and inspiration. At the tender age of two, Azucena was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy, a developmental disability, and as a result, she has had 18 orthopedic surgeries in both of her legs. Living with a disability has made her aware of all the challenges, barriers, and struggles but also the joy that people with disabilities like her deal with daily. She is a very active member of her community, volunteering for various non-profit organizations such as the Adaptive Sports and Recreation Association (ASRA) in San Diego and mentoring first-generation Hispanic/Latino students pursuing higher education.

WS STAFF



WS BOARD

Oraiu Amoni, Black Worker Initiative Community Organizer

Leonard Brown, Black Worker Initiative Worker Leader

Azucena Garcia-Ferro, Worker Advocate

Benita Gordon, Operations Manager

Stephen Knight, Executive Director

Amira-Sade Moodie, Program Assistant

Cerina Talley-Ragsdale, Administrative Assistant

Jora Trang, Chief of Staff & Equity

Karín Umfrey, Senior Staff Attorney

Rachel van Geenhoven, Communications Manager

AnaStacia Nicol Wright, Policy Manager

Alor Calderon – Chair, Employee Rights Center

Denyse Clancy – Kazan Law

Deogracia Cornelio – Warehouse Worker Resource Center

Alejandra Domenzain – UC Labor and Occupational Health Program (LOHP)

Carisa Harris-Adamson – UCSF & UCB School of Public Health

Dr. Robert Harrison – UCSF Division of Occupational & Environmental Medicine

Amy Hines-Shaikh – Wild Cat Consulting

Sarah Kanbar – Beeson, Tayer & Bodine

Elmer Lizardi – California Labor Federation

Xochitl Lopez – UC Davis Labor and Community Center

Kim Savage – Kim Savage Law

Ruth Silver Taube – Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center, SCU School of Law

Cheryl Wallach – Ford & Wallach

Organization names are listed for identification purposes only.

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SUPPORT US!

PLEASE DONATE TO **WORKSAFE** IF YOU ARE ABLE TO - EVERY LITTLE BIT HELPS!



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WE THANK YOU
FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT IN
OUR PROGRAMS