

WORKSAFE

safety, health, and justice for workers
seguridad, salud y justicia para los trabajadores



2023 IMPACT REPORT

A person in a dark suit and red tie is holding a large, bright orange rectangular sign. The sign contains white text. The background is a blurred image of a crowd of people, with a teal color overlay at the top and bottom of the page.

INTRODUCTION

Hello friends and allies! We're proud of what we've accomplished this year at Worksafe, and we're excited to share some of the developments both in our work and the world of workers' rights at large.

We managed to delve deeper into our strategic goals and make progress according to our Theory of Change, whilst navigating significant changes to our staff capacity, adding on additional team members, and implementing an entirely new project which we hope will become a core part of the work we do.

This is a significant time for workers and their communities. We are seeing both a lot of progress in terms of how society views work and workers, and significant and growing threats to the safety, wellbeing and autonomy of workers everywhere.

We hope this report will inspire and energize you for the fight ahead, even as it encourages and uplifts you with what we've already accomplished together!

In solidarity,

Amira, AnaStacia, Jora, Karín, Melania, Rachel, Stephen, and Thais

Worksafe Strategic Plan 2022–2027

PRIORITY 1 ▶ Empower under-resourced and marginalized workers

GOAL 1 Build worker, community, advocate strength and power.

PRIORITY 2 ▶ Advance worker health and safety through law and policy

GOAL 2 Promote and advocate for Occupational Safety and Health laws, regulations and standards that uphold the safety and dignity of disenfranchised and marginalized workers in California.

GOAL 3 Engage in agency and government oversight and collaboration to advance better enforcement, staffing, and protective policy.

PRIORITY 3 ▶ Strengthen Worksafe

GOAL 4 Prioritize organizational health and job quality in the culture at Worksafe.

GOAL 5 Maintain financial stability and increase revenue.



Empowering Under-Resourced and Marginalized Workers

CALIFORNIA COALITION FOR WORKER POWER (CCWP)

Worksafe has been actively involved in this groundbreaking coalition since its inception. In 2023, CCWP cosponsored, campaigned for, and passed SB 497 to create a rebuttable presumption when an employee fires a worker within 90 days of a wage-related complaint (more in the legislative section). CCWP also successfully advocated for the California Workplace Outreach Project ([CWOP](#)) to be included in the governor's 2023-24 state budget at \$25 million.

CALIFORNIA DOMESTIC WORKERS COALITION

Karín has led our efforts with this coalition, attending regular virtual meetings and lobby days at the Capitol. In 2021, California domestic workers advocated for SB 321, which convened an Advisory Committee of domestic workers, employers, and occupational health and safety experts with Cal/OSHA to create the first ever health and safety guidelines for the domestic work industry which was published earlier this year. SB 686 builds on the work of SB 321 to end the exclusion. The Coalition was able to pass Health and Safety for All Domestic Workers through the Senate and Assembly for the third time, but again, Governor Newsom vetoed. To quote the coalition: “We will not back down from this fight. Alongside our allies, we will continue to push for the health and safety protections our workers need to thrive, and we remain committed to finding a solution that gives California’s domestic workers the dignity and respect they deserve.” (Read their full response [here](#).)

Worksafe stays committed to supporting the Coalition to end the racist exclusion that denies household domestic employees from accessing occupational safety and health protections.





OTHER COALITION WORK

We helped support and determine priorities for several other coalitions of which we are members, including the Coalition of Low-Wage and Immigrant Worker Advocates (CLIWA), the Work & Family Coalition, Safety Net 4 All, and the Northern California Day Labor Organizing Network (NorCalDLON).

CWOP

Worksafe is a Bay Area regional lead for the COVID-19 Workplace Outreach Project (soon to be renamed the California Workplace Outreach Project). We have been working with the African Advocacy Network to translate information about paid leave and other workplace rights for specific language communities. Both Amharic and Haitian Creole are spoken by large numbers of people in the Bay Area, but are given very little mainstream outreach attention. We also created a Black Worker Outreach Project under the umbrella of CWOP (more on page 10) and have begun initiating efforts to connect the California Indian Legal Services to ensure the Bay Area Native American population is being reached.

Legal Support, Training and Assistance for Workers & Organizations that Defend Them

28 Direct technical assistance to organizations and individuals

4 Cases of direct legal representation

DETAINEE WORKERS EXPOSED TO COVID-19 AND OTHER HAZARDS

Worksafe continues to support Immigrant Defense Advocates (IDA) and the California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice (CCIJ) representing detained immigrant workers at the Golden State Annex in central California. Cal/OSHA found that the private detention company GEO Group engaged in willful and serious violations, and issued fines of almost \$105,000, principally for violations of the COVID-19 ATD standard.

CAR WASH WORKERS

In August 2022, we received a case from our community partner, Trabajadores United Workers United (TUWU), involving workers at a popular car wash in San Francisco. We are co-counseling with La Raza Centro Legal in San Francisco. The clients are dealing with several issues at their workplace and began organizing amongst themselves to address the concerns. Cal/OSHA closed the investigation in 2023 and issued several citations to the employer.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AT A HIGH-END RESTAURANT

After experiencing multiple health and safety issues, including workplace violence problems related to the chef/manager in charge and repeated burns at the workplace, employees at this restaurant reached out to Worksafe for assistance last year, and we began co-counseling with Centro Legal de la Raza, who is handling their wage theft and discrimination claims.

TRAININGS AND PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ **March 8-9:** Stephen participated in a COVID-19 Workplace Issues Panel at the American Bar Association Winter WOSH meeting
- ✓ **March 27th:** Karin provided a training on Filing a Complaint with Cal/OSHA to Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño (CBDIO)
- ✓ **March 28th:** Jora offered a Cultural Humility Training with the Legal Aid Association of California (LAAC), where Jora serves on the Board
- ✓ **April 12th:** Jora offered an Elimination of Bias Training in partnership with LAAC to legal aid lawyers and staff
- ✓ **June 20-21st:** Jora participated in a workshop on Communities, Climate Change, and Health Equity—Lessons Learned in Addressing Inequities in Heat-Related Climate Change Impacts at the National Academy of Sciences Conference
- ✓ **June 26th:** Jora collaborated with Ruth Silver-Taube, Worksafe Board member and Supervising Worker Rights Attorney with the Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center at Santa Clara University School of Law, and Leigh Ferrin of One Justice to offer a statewide discussion of Legal Ethics for Attorneys and Worker Advocates
- ✓ **July 12th and 28th:** AnaStacia co-presented a workshop for a large audience of legal aid lawyers and worker advocates on Deferred Action for Undocumented Worker Whistleblowers with our partners at the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law
- ✓ **August 1st:** Stephen presented on Protecting Warehouse Workers from Extreme Heat to the biannual California Climate Adaptation Forum

CLIMATE-LINKED WORKER ADVOCACY

In our Extreme Heat work to advance Indoor Heat protections for all California workers, we have partnered and strategized with Climate Resolve and the Adrienne Arsht-Rockefeller Foundation Resilience Center.

WILDFIRE RESILIENCY WORKING GROUP

Worksafe is engaged with the efforts of the Wildfire Resiliency Working Group in strategizing tools and crafting messaging to promote the use of prescribed and cultural fires to prevent wildfires and reduce smoke impacts on workers and communities.

Public Outreach

WORKER MEMORIAL DAY

Worksafe partnered with an amazing coalition of South Bay worker advocates on our first in-person Worker Memorial Day event since 2019.

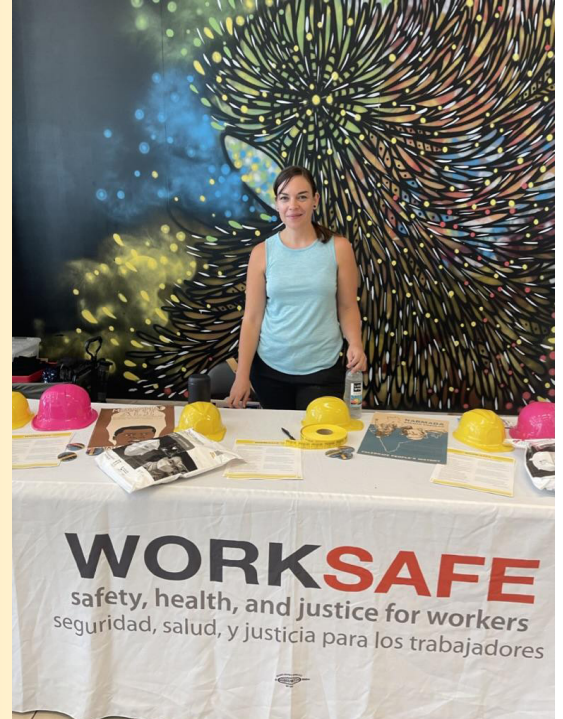
[Please read our detailed blog post](#) for more details on this special event.

Multiple board members attended; former Worksafe attorney Nicole Marquez was there and told us that it was the most impactful WMD event she's ever attended.





Stephen with fellow panelists at the ABA Winter WOSH meeting in San Diego



Rachel tabling at the Health and Wellness Fair in San Jose



Stephen in Pomona along with fellow panelists Enrique Huerta, Climate Resolve, Mariana Estrada, Amazon worker, and Kelly Turner, UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation

CWOP BLACK WORKER OUTREACH PROJECT

Worksafe has launched a comprehensive community outreach project for Black workers. Partnering with local and national Black-led organizations, Black Cultural Zone and the National Black Worker Center, Worksafe has been conducting an interactive regional and state-wide outreach and organizing campaign to reach Black workers about their labor and employment rights and strategies for building worker power. This project is aligned with the National Black Worker Center's national movement for a Black Workers' Bill of Rights. Through this project, Worksafe seeks to uplift self-determination and sustainability in the work lives of Black workers.

This project envisions a Bay Area-wide collaborative effort amongst multiple organizations and community organizers to bring employment and labor information to Black workers in their communities via pop-up, live, street-level worker's rights trainings and engagements. The project will also hold leadership trainings and legal rights clinics.

Jora is leading the work, and Worksafe has partnered with two experienced worker advocates on a contract basis through this calendar year: Orai Amoni, former Housing and Workers' Rights Director of Jobs With Justice SF, and Derrick Mohammad, a longshoreman, lawyer, and former pro bono attorney with Worksafe.



BLOGS

We published the following blogs over the past year to help raise awareness of various health and safety issues and ensure that workers are represented in conversations which tend to center employer concerns. Please read and share with your networks!

- ✓ [Recap of SB 321 Advisory Committee Guidelines](#)
- ✓ [Worksafe attends “Dignidad: Domestic Workers’ Journey for Justice in California” screening in the Mission](#)
- ✓ [Worker’s Memorial Day 2023](#)
- ✓ [Legislative Updates, Pt. 1 \(May 2023\)](#)
- ✓ [Avoiding Unauthorized Practice of Law as a Worker Advocate](#)
- ✓ [Protect Outdoor Workers with Prescribed Fires](#)
- ✓ [“I Fear There Are Not Enough Lungs”: the CA Emergency Silicosis Standard](#)
- ✓ [We Can Do More to Protect Workers from High Heat](#)
- ✓ [Protect the Whistleblowers](#)

REPORTS

SEIU and Worksafe co-authored the report “**AGUÁNTATE!**” about hazards faced by fast food workers due to employer neglect and law-breaking.

WORKSAFE IN THE MEDIA

- ✓ [‘Health and Safety Are at Risk’: Only 1 California Safety Inspector Is Bilingual in Chinese or Vietnamese](#), KQED News, November 21 (Worksafe provided background information for this article)
- ✓ [Cal/OSHA Staff Shortage Creates Backlog of Cases](#), Capital & Main, January 10
- ✓ [Paid Sick Leave Roils Sides in California Disease Rule Proposal](#), Bloomberg Law, January 17
- ✓ [Immigrant Detention Center Operator Faces Fines, Lawsuit Over Working Conditions](#), Capital & Main, February 8
- ✓ [Battle Over Infectious-Disease Regulations Under Way in California](#), Society for Human Resource Management, March 17
- ✓ [California Seeks Nation’s Toughest Workplace Lead Exposure Rules](#), Bloomberg Law, April 19
- ✓ [California is getting hotter. Here’s how the state wants to protect indoor workers from high temperatures](#), San Francisco Chronicle, May 18
- ✓ [As Workplaces Become More Violent, California Calls for Stricter Protections](#), Capital & Main, June 23
- ✓ [Regulators to Consider Emergency Rules Regarding Silica Dust](#), KQED, July 20
- ✓ [U.S. Workers Pay the Price While Congress and Employers Debate Need for Heat Regulations](#), CBS News, August 30th

Legislative & Policy Work

POLICY WORK

CAL/OSHA STAFFING CRISIS

Worksafe and SoCalCOSH have been active as a subcommittee of the OSH Strategy Group in conversations around staffing issues. Cal/OSHA's vacancy rate stands at 37%.



INDOOR HEAT

We've worked hard this year to advance the Indoor Heat standard, culminating with 30+ signers on our comment letter delivered for the May 18 Standards Board meeting. The Board hearing featured strong and dramatic testimony from multiple warehouse, fast food, delivery drivers and other frontline workers rebutting in real time the attempt by industry to complain about elements of the Indoor Heat proposal.

LEGISLATIVE WORK

2023 saw many labor actions and bills both in the state of California and nationwide, many of which were signed into law and will improve the lives of workers in 2024 and beyond.

The Fast Food Council was created alongside an agreement for a wage increase to \$20/hour for fast food workers.

PRO-WORKER BILLS SIGNED INTO LAW

- ✔ **SB 497 Equal Pay and Anti-Retaliation** creates a rebuttable presumption of retaliation when an employer fires someone within 90 days of taking a protected action, thus shifting the burden of proof away from the employee. We are very hopeful that this will be a real step toward addressing the retaliation that has been [rampant in this state](#).
- ✔ **SB 616 Paid Sick & Safe Days** increases the number of mandatory sick days offered by employers from three to five.
- ✔ **SB 553 Workplace Violence Prevention** requires employers to implement basic protections to protect workers from violence while they're on the job, including developing and implementing a workplace violence prevention plan, logging incidents in a violent incident log, and providing workers with workplace violence prevention training.
- ✔ **AB 636 H2A Notices** implements more stringent requirements for notifying agricultural workers of their rights with the H2A visa, including providing them in Spanish.

Strengthening Worksafe

NEW TEAM MEMBERS

We have a new office manager and a new program assistant who are bringing much needed organization and support to our team:

Melania Mora took over as Office Manager on March 1. Melania was born and grew up in Venezuela. While studying engineering at the Fermin Toro University, she participated in different political and social activities to raise awareness against the dictatorship of Hugo Chavez, and was granted political asylum in the United States. She has worked different roles, but her career as an accountant began with ICA Cristo Rey Academy where she was in charge of receiving donations and assisting low-income families, and in other roles she has assisted people by communicating about Labor Laws and company policies. Melania is dedicated to lifting and encouraging the spirit of the people from a message of understanding, humility and forgiveness in order to unite differences and inspire the solution not the conflict.

Our new Program Assistant, **Amira-Sade Moodie** was born in Kingston, Jamaica, raised in Virginia Beach, VA and “grew up” in New York City where they attended School of Visual Arts to study film. Amira graduated with a BFA in Screenwriting, and spent 10 years in the city holding various positions in TV production offices and studios. Experiencing injustice in different capacities within film & TV, Amira stepped away from the film industry to focus on finding ways to bring mindfulness to everyday life, including the workplace. Amira found their way to the Bay Area in 2019 in pursuit of this venture.

Two contractors have joined our Black Worker Outreach Project team: Community Organizer **Oraiu Amoni** and Workers Rights Educator and Attorney **Derrick H. Muhammad**.

Oraiu has spent over a decade working in California politics with the City of Oakland, the California State Assembly, Larry Tramutola, one of the country’s top political strategists, SEIU-UHW, SEIU-ULTCW, and United Teachers Los Angeles. His prior positions have included Senior Associate with Prime Strategies Commerce, Project Organizer for Edison Planners and Designers on behalf of Engineers and Scientists of California, Local 20, Lobbyist for the California Nurses Association, and Housing and Workers’ Rights Director with Jobs with Justice, San Francisco.

Derrick is an attorney licensed in Washington, Connecticut, Georgia, and in Federal Court. His federal practice areas include Social Security Disability Appeals, Longshore and Harbor Workers’ Claims, Immigration, and Veterans Benefits. He is a member of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union. He has spent a decade working on the docks in the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Area. In 2010 he was appointed by the Mayor of Oakland to the Citizen’s Police Review Board. In 2012 he ran for Oakland City Council to represent Oakland’s District 3. Although he was unsuccessful in his bid, he garnered a significant amount of community support. He is a frequently requested speaker by local youth groups and has been recognized with community service awards by numerous community groups.

EQUITY & INCLUSION

Moving forward from last year’s work in incorporating equity & inclusion issues in our Board engagement, Strategic Planning, Organizational Health and Human resources, we are finalizing an equity & inclusion statement with the Board’s involvement and participation.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

We're raising \$25K to do more in 2024!

Donate to our campaign at
worksafe.org/2023eoy

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Our Anniversary Event will take place on June 5th, 2024 in Oakland's Preservation Park.

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BLACK WORKER OUTREACH PROGRAM CONSULTANTS

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Ruth Silver Taube

Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center

Kim Savage

Kim Savage Law

Juliann Sum, Treasurer

Retired

Caitlin Vega

Union Made

Cheryl Wallach

Ford & Wallach

Organization names are listed for identification purposes only.

MISSION

We work relentlessly towards systemic change to protect the dignity, health, and safety of workers.

VISION

A world where jobs are safe and dignified and workers and their communities are healthy and thriving.

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

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