



Annual Report

2021

Warehouse Workers for Justice

2021 Annual Report



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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Marcos Cenicerros

Dear friends,

2021 was a year of incredible growth for WWJ as we more than doubled our staff and dramatically expanded our program work. In parallel with a national surge of worker organizing and activism, we stood with warehouse workers to demand safety, dignity, and decent pay for the people who never stopped going to work to provide for their families amid a global pandemic and to keep the country running. Even in communities hardest hit by COVID-19, we've seen amazing energy and commitment to fighting for the safe, family-supporting jobs we all deserve.

In parallel with a national surge of worker organizing and activism, we stood with warehouse workers to demand safety, dignity, and decent pay for the people who never stopped going to work to provide for their families amid a global pandemic and to keep the country running.

As a worker center, WWJ doesn't focus exclusively on workplace organizing: we're also concerned with how the warehousing industry impacts surrounding communities. From poverty wages that put Will County families at chronically high risk of eviction to air pollution that drives disproportionate rates of respiratory disease, the warehouse economy affects everyone in the region. We're proud of the way our team stepped up to meet our community's needs with new programs focused on COVID-19 outreach, vaccine access, and housing support for renters impacted by the pandemic.

In our organizing work this year, WWJ stood with workers to demand accountability and workplace safety at Rich Products Corporation. Workers had already died from COVID-19 here when reckless disregard for machine safety caused the tragic and preventable death of Adewale Ogunyemi. Our environmental justice team built up the Environmental Justice Leadership Committee and took on fights from the No to Northpoint campaign to fair water infrastructure in Joliet to truck electrification around the port. And in June, the Temp Worker Union Alliance Project (TWUAP) moved to WWJ to continue building bridges between temps and unionized workers across Chicagoland.

The pandemic has heightened the crisis warehouse workers were already facing and will continue to face even when the public health crisis is past. WWJ is committed to the long-term fight for power and solidarity, and we're grateful to all our allies in the struggle.

We're grateful to our former executive director, Roberto Clack, for stewarding the organization through such an incredible period of growth, and we wish him well in all his future endeavors. As we move forward into 2022, I'm excited to build on our expanded organizing and outreach from the past year. The pandemic has heightened the crisis warehouse workers were already facing and will continue to face even when the public health crisis is past. WWJ is committed to the long-term fight for power and solidarity, and we're grateful to all our allies in the struggle.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marcos Cenicerros', written in a cursive style.

MARCOS CENICEROS
Executive Director

ABOUT

WAREHOUSE WORKERS FOR JUSTICE

Just southwest of Chicago, North America's largest inland port processes a constant flow of mile-long trains from both coasts. Anything that made it to Newark or Long Beach or Los Angeles in a shipping container might very well make it here. From the railyard, thousands of semi trucks haul cargo to a 40-mile sprawl of windowless prefabricated buildings in every direction. The warehouses spread along the interstates through the suburbs up into the South Side of Chicago and down into rural Will County communities surrounded by corn and soybeans.

Warehouse work dominates the economy in Will County. Amazon is the county's largest employer with roughly 7,000 direct-hire employees, and that's not even counting the temps who work in the warehouses but are technically employed by staffing agencies. Some of the nation's largest and most profitable companies - household names like Walmart, Target, Home Depot, Trader Joe's, and Mars Wrigley - have critical distribution facilities here. But the workers here who keep the economy running spend long hours doing repetitive and physically demanding work for low pay with minimal benefits. Warehouses were dangerous places to work even before the pandemic, and employers have failed to keep workers safe over the past two years.

In the face of an industry that's historically done nothing but exploit and abuse its workers, Warehouse Workers for Justice is fighting with warehouse workers for stable, family-supporting jobs. Will County is a strategic pressure point for the entire national supply chain: the leverage is there to demand better than precarious, poverty-level jobs. But to get it, we need to organize.

Since 2008, WWJ has been pursuing creative organizing strategies in an environment deeply hostile to any kind of collective action. As a worker center, we support union drives when the opportunity arises, but we also pursue other kinds of protected collective action, community mobilization, political advocacy, and public pressure campaigns. We're proud to present our 2021 Annual Report detailing our work over the past year, and we welcome you to contact us to get involved in the work.



2021 BY THE NUMBERS

During a time of unprecedented need, our team stepped up and was able to deliver a greater impact than ever.

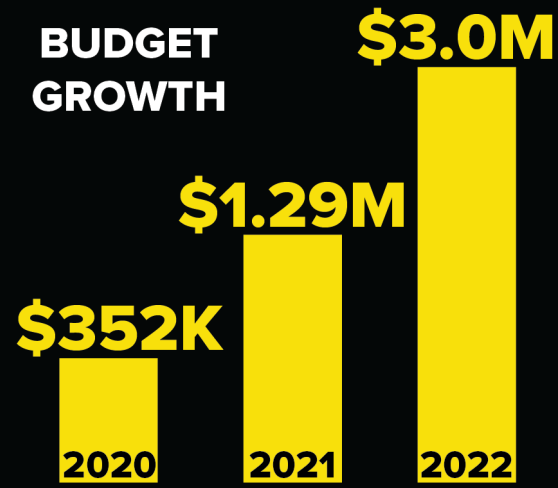
18,544

WORKERS REACHED ABOUT COVID-19 SAFETY AND VACCINATION

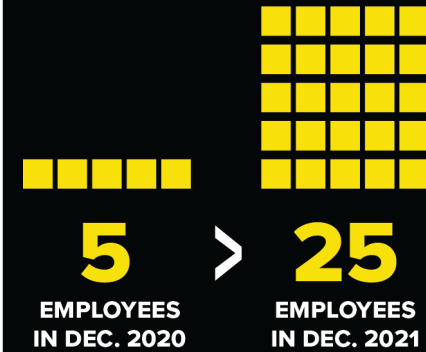
6,612

PEOPLE REACHED FOR SUPPORT REGARDING WORKPLACE RIGHTS AND CRIMINAL RECORDS RELIEF

BUDGET GROWTH



TEAM GROWTH



3

NEW WORKER COMMITTEES FOUNDED

2

NEW PROGRAM AREAS ESTABLISHED

\$9.76

AVERAGE GRASSROOTS DONATION



YEAR IN REVIEW

- Armed right-wing extremists storm the US capitol building to protest the results of a democratic election.

- WWJ releases *The COVID Jungle* report, highlighting the ways employers failed to protect low-wage food workers during the pandemic.

- WWJ hosts a series of transit justice webinars to provide a community space for education about freight electrification and discussion of how air pollution is affecting Will County residents and workers.

- WWJ launches community air quality testing in Will County to gather data about the impact of diesel pollution on local air quality.

- In collaboration with the Illinois Department of Public Health and Our Lady of Mount Carmel, WWJ hosts two vaccine clinics in Will County.

- On July 26th, WWJ hosts an emergency press conference and vaccine outreach event in Will County to highlight the risks that workers still face from the pandemic and the need for vaccination outreach in Will County.

- During June and July, WWJ engages 40 volunteers from directly-impacted communities across Chicago's working-class south suburbs in a community-designed air testing project.

- Governor Pritzker signs the Clean Energy Jobs Act (CEJA) into law on 9/15.

- First meeting of the WWJ Food Worker Justice Committee, which seeks to build sustained worker leadership in food warehouses.

- WWJ hosts the Working Women Know your Rights series of online workshops to reach women warehouse workers with information about gender discrimination, pay equity, and their workplace rights.

- WWJ ramps up our immigration advocacy work with two actions in November demanding safety and freedom from fear for immigrant workers.

- At our Future of Work Town Hall, WWJ amplifies the voices of warehouse workers who are still experiencing unsafe working conditions during COVID-19.

JAN > FEB > MAR > APR > MAY > JUNE > JULY > AUG > SEPT > OCT > NOV > DEC

- As part of a collaboration with Temp Worker Justice, the Chicago Workers Collaborative, and other allies, WWJ hosts a press conference to spotlight the release of *Opening the Door*, a groundbreaking report finding widespread racial discrimination in Chicagoland's industrial temp agencies.

- WWJ holds No to Northpoint actions in Chicago and Joliet to keep up the pressure on Governor Pritzker and other Illinois leaders to oppose the massive Northpoint warehousing development in Will County.

- With funding from the Illinois Access to Justice Network, WWJ kicks off our eviction prevention and tenant legal aid outreach in Will County.

- WWJ launches our WWJ Worker Outreach website to reach workers with targeted information about vaccination and pandemic rental assistance.

- Historic union campaign at the Bessemer, AL Amazon warehouse fails under intense pressure from Amazon.

- WWJ formalizes our partnership with the Temp Worker Union Alliance Project (TWUAP), which moves from its previous home with the Chicago Workers Collaborative to become part of WWJ.

- Illinois passes the Clean Energy Jobs Act (CEJA) after a hard-fought campaign from a coalition of groups including WWJ.

- After the tragic and preventable death of worker Adewale "Wale" Ogunyemi at Rich Products Corporation, WWJ partners with the United African Organization and other community groups to hold a vigil for Wale and demand justice and safety for all warehouse workers.

- On August 16th, WWJ staff and Environmental Justice Leadership Committee members meet with Rep. Bill Foster and host an action outside of his office to demand full funding for climate infrastructure and no fossil fuel subsidies.

- WWJ's Cook County Worker Health and Safety Committee begins meeting, with workers bringing concerns about everything from COVID-19 to OSHA violations at work.

- On October 2nd, WWJ's Charged Up Fest creates opportunities for Will County residents to learn about the benefits of truck electrification and the community groups already engaged in environmental justice work around the port.

- On October 6th, WWJ partners with the Tamil Nadu Textile and Common Labor Union and the Justice for Jayasre campaign to build international solidarity between Will County warehouse workers and other workers in the supply chain for major retail brands.

- WWJ launches our Amazon Water Tax campaign to demand that warehouse employers - the largest consumers of water in Will County - pay their fair share towards a new pipeline needed for Joliet's municipal water supply.

- WWJ continues to hold actions in support of immigrant workers during the Immigrant Week of Action, including a December 13th action in Chicago. As part of the Immigrant Week of Action, WWJ collaborates with the Illinois Green New Deal network to coordinate an action for immigrant, worker, and environmental justice.

- On December 22nd, WWJ members and community leaders attend the Joliet City Council meeting to speak out against the Northpoint development and demand accountability from elected officials.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Food Worker Justice

WWJ's Food Worker Justice Program grew this year as we hired a second full-time organizer to fight for safe working conditions in food production, distribution, and logistics facilities. The Chicago region is the second-largest food production/distribution hub in the United States, and food warehouses are often combined with production facilities, creating unique safety challenges.



Justice for Wale

The Food Worker Justice Program took on Rich Products Corporation after the tragic death of Adewale "Wale" Ogunyemi, a food warehouse worker who was killed in a preventable workplace incident. Like many food warehouses, Rich Products has a long history of OSHA violations and workplace safety incidents, but without public pressure, nothing was changed to protect workers. WWJ helped amplify Adewale's story, demand accountability, and drive narratives around safer working conditions for all warehouse workers. Getting justice for Adewale Ogunyemi remains a priority at WWJ, and we are committed to telling his story, holding Rich Products Corporation accountable, and working to protect the health and safety of all warehouse workers.

The COVID Jungle

In January, WWJ published The COVID Jungle, a report based on worker interviews and first-hand worker testimonies about unsafe working conditions, employers' disregard for health and safety, and ongoing threats of retaliation against employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. The report drove mass media coverage and generated unprecedented awareness of the challenges and hazards faced by front-line food workers across the region.

61%

of workers said they would **not receive pay** from their employer if they were **sick** or **forced to quarantine**

49%

of workers reported having **no health insurance** at all

83%

of workers who reported contracting COVID-19 said that they did **not receive paid sick leave** from their employer or government assistance



COVID-19

WWJ's Worker Outreach Program continued emergency COVID-19 outreach this year, with a focus on tackling vaccine hesitancy and misinformation. Warehouse workers face multiple barriers to vaccination: many cannot afford to take time off to manage side effects, some are afraid of medical bills and not aware that the vaccine is free, and others have no trusted healthcare professional to discuss their concerns with - a predictable consequence of jobs that offer inadequate health insurance if they provide it at all.

As vaccinations rolled out, WWJ hosted workshops with healthcare professionals, led vaccination events, and continued direct outreach to warehouse workers and community members. We handed out free masks, hand sanitizer, and disposable gloves along with information about the vaccine, and assisted workers in accessing and scheduling vaccination appointments.



Our Own Vaccination Clinic

In May, WWJ held two vaccination events, providing first and second-dose vaccines to 81 workers.

It can't end with handing out masks and vaccine pamphlets. Warehouse work was dangerous - for some workers, deadly - during the pandemic because warehouse employers treat their workers as disposable. For the past two years, the world's most profitable companies have refused to create safe work environments or provide basic necessities like paid sick time. In our health and safety organizing, WWJ is building worker leadership to demand safe workplaces during COVID-19 and beyond.

Legal Outreach

For warehouse workers, access to legal support can mean the chance to move out of perma-temping into a stable, direct-hire position, or the difference between eviction and stable housing. This year, WWJ expanded our legal outreach into housing support and eviction prevention, as well as continuing our support for workers who experience violations of their legal rights at work or need help with sealing and expungement of criminal records. Here's what we accomplished in 2021:

- Information about legal and workplace rights: 6,612 people reached through canvassing and outreach; 1,838 attendees at online workshops hosted in partnership with attorneys at Prairie State Legal Services and Raise the Floor Alliance.
- Criminal records relief, driver's license reinstatement, and other legal representation needs: 431 workers provided with assessments of their legal issues, referrals to pro bono legal services, and personal support with paperwork and other requirements.
- Housing support and eviction prevention: 4,034 people reached through canvassing and outreach; 399 tenants provided with personal support, including assessments of eviction-related issues and referrals to pro bono legal support for housing and eviction issues.



White House Recognition

In September, Will County was recognized by the White House for efficiently moving federal relief money to tenants at risk of eviction due to the pandemic. WWJ is proud to be part of this effort.

TWUAP

Warehouse Workers for Justice and the Temp Worker Union Alliance Project (TWUAP) were proud to announce their partnership this year. While we've worked together before, we're excited to combine our resources to address ongoing issues in the temporary staffing industry. Over the past several years, employers have increasingly used temp workers to drive down wages and dilute unionized workforces with nonunion labor. At the same time, union membership has taken a hit in several sectors. TWUAP is building solidarity between temps and union members to maintain the gains that unions have won and help temp workers win economic stability and quality union jobs. Adding to existing partnerships with the Chicago Federation of Labor and the UIC School of Public Health, this year TWUAP established a partnership with the Machinists Local 126. IAM 126 and TWUAP are working together to identify temped out work sites and build worker power with temp and direct hires alike.

After joining WWJ in June, TWUAP has continued to do health and safety outreach to temp workers in Cook County around COVID-19 and other health and safety concerns, as part of our partnership with the Cook County Department of Public Health.



In 2021, TWUAP gave out 1,700 N95, KN95, and TWUAP branded reusable masks and 500 vials of TWUAP branded hand sanitizer packaged in hundreds of PPE kits to temp workers at warehouses and temporary staffing agencies.

Temp workers are some of the most precarious and marginalized workers in Chicagoland's economy - WWJ is proud to work with TWUAP to demand justice, safe workplaces, and fair treatment for temps across the region.

Building a Sustainable Movement

In 2021, WWJ expanded our individual giving program by hiring a full-time staff member to focus on our grassroots fundraising efforts. As we seek to stay accountable to workers and allies, we're building new ways for supporters to engage in a sustainable way.



In line with WWJ's mission, our individual giving fundraising program is guided by a community-centric framework: we center our practices around racial and economic justice, and we value all forms of support, monetary or not. We challenge our supporters to give not with a charity mindset, but rather in solidarity with the workers and allies who are leading the fight for stable, family-supporting jobs, living wages, and a safer workplace. We see giving as another way to build relationships, strengthen community, and welcome folks into the movement for worker justice.

In the spirit of our fundraising mission, this September WWJ ran our first ever digital fundraising campaign with an emphasis on building community support for our work through monthly recurring donations. Recurring contributions provide ongoing stability that allows WWJ to sustain our vital organizing work. We launched two informational videos with the campaign to highlight the issues warehouse workers face as essential workers who keep the supply chain running. Dozens of allies signed up to give a doable amount each month, which is a huge step towards building financial power from within our own community.

We're looking forward to continuing to build a culture of sustainable, community-centric giving in the year ahead.

Environmental Justice

The constant flow of trucks from port to warehouses in Will County generates dangerous levels of air pollution, and water demand from warehouses is accelerating a local water supply crisis. WWJ staff and Environmental Justice Leadership Committee members are fighting for clean air, good jobs, and justice for frontline communities. EJLC members are 90% youth of color and 90% current or former warehouse workers.



Truck Electrification

The harms of diesel pollution around the Will County port are disproportionately concentrated in Black and Brown working-class communities that see the heaviest truck traffic. This year, WWJ led a push for truck electrification in Will County, including air quality testing around the port and a day of community outreach at Charged Up! Fest.

“Our mission is to create systemic change in and around the nation’s largest inland port located in Joliet, and we want to achieve that with ... the frontline communities and workers as the leadership of their communities.” - Ericka Gonzalez-Guzman, Environmental Justice Leadership Committee Leader

Northpoint

In 2021, WWJ continued the fight against the massive Northpoint development, which would see an additional 3,000 acres of Will County paved over for warehouses that provide nothing but precarious, low-quality jobs and more truck traffic.

Amazon Water Tax

In October, our environmental justice team also launched the Amazon Water Tax campaign to demand that warehouse employers - some of the largest water consumers in Will County - bear the cost of critical new infrastructure in Joliet.



Issues Advocacy

WWJ has also been active in statewide coalition work to advocate for a Green New Deal and policies that create stable jobs in the clean energy economy. The Clean Energy Jobs Act, passed in June and signed into law in September, was a first step towards environmental justice for Will County and Illinois - as implementation begins, WWJ is staying involved to demand real representation and equity for Will County and working people across the state.



MEET THE WWJ STAFF



ABDULAHI GULED

(he/him)

Worker Protection Outreach Organizer

What was a highlight of your past year at WWJ?

It's been great to watch WWJ grow from a staff of five to the awesome team we have now.

What has been your theme song this past year?

"Spaceship" by Kanye speaks to my soul. I hope Elon can give me a ride to Mars one day.



AMY SANCHEZ

(she/her/ella)

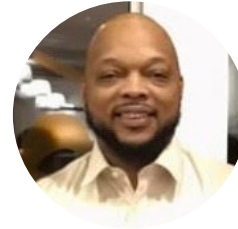
Lead Legal Organizer

What was a highlight of your past year at WWJ?

A highlight was collaborating with Will County partner organizations to distribute more than 80% of Federal rental assistance to those in need, specifically essential warehouse workers who could not access traditional referrals while working long hours. The White House recognized Will County's efforts and we know WE were/are the link to supporting warehouse workers.

If you ever wrote a book, what would it be about?

I am currently writing a book about my life experiences, and how I became an organizer at a young age. I am honored to have the WWJ family with me on this journey in this book.



BOBBY FRIERSON

(he/him)

Workplace Justice Organizer

What does building worker power mean to you, and how do you live that out in your work?

Building worker power to me means helping workers come together to fight back against companies that exploit their labor and cutting corners on their health and safety. To ultimately win changes in the workplace.

What are you looking forward to in 2022?

I am looking to build out worker power within the e-commerce giant known as Amazon in 2022.



BRANDIN MCDONALD

(he/him)

Community Health Organizer

What person inspires you in your work and why?

My mom and kids because I don't want them to experience the things that I went through, and because my mom is no longer with me due to COVID.

Where have you always wanted to travel and why?

Africa, Puerto Rico, Mexico and Jamaica to see the culture.



ELIZABETH FOSTER

(she/her)

Development Director

What was your favorite thing you worked on/took part in this year?

As part of the admin/office staff, I mostly sit behind a computer, so any time I got the chance to go out and support actions with the organizing staff was definitely a highlight!

Where have you always wanted to travel and why?

I'm not much of a traveler because I love Chicago so much and really just want to be in the city and never leave, but I think I would enjoy picking a neighborhood where I don't usually go and staying there for a couple weeks just to get to know a new part of the city.



EYASU SHUMIE

(he/him)

Food Supply Chain Organizer

What was a highlight of your past year at WWJ?

The rally for immigrant worker protections at the ICE field office in Chicago. We had so much support from such a wide array of voices, and it was amazing seeing how so many of the relationships we had been building ended up manifesting in such a powerful way.

What does building worker power mean to you?

Putting people in the position to reclaim a level of agency in their lives that they didn't realize they had. Finding the thing that binds people of different races, nationalities, religions, and sexualities together, and through a struggle where they can learn how much power they can have by coming together.



FELIX ORTIZ

(he/they)

Community Health Navigator

What was your favorite thing you worked on/took part in this year?

My favorite thing I took part in was getting to be a part of WWJ's Environmental Justice Leadership Committee. It's been so awesome getting to see the committee grow and collaborate on important things like clean air and water affordability.

What are you looking forward to in 2022?

I'm looking forward to growing my skills as an organizer and expanding my abilities at WWJ!



GISELLE RODRIGUEZ

(she/her)

Social Media Coordinator, TWUAP

What was a highlight of your past year at WWJ?

The highlight of last year at WWJ/TWUAP was being able to expand our social media efforts across different platforms and different regions in Chicago and Suburbs. As well as meeting amazing organizers who care about the cause and the community.

What are you looking forward to in 2022?

I look forward to continuing to create content that is accessible and educates our community on COVID-19 safety, guidelines, and best practices.



HANA URBAN

(they/them)

Eviction Mitigation Specialist

What was a highlight of your past year at WWJ?

My highlight was probably our first community meeting at Nowell Park over the summer, and the day WWJ staff went public with our union.

What book do you wish you could hand out on street corners?

'Violent Borders: Refugees and the Right to Move' by Reece Jones.



ILISSA VALERIO

(she/her)

Program Director

What does building worker power mean to you, and how do you live that out in your work?

Building worker power is the collective action of people working to have changes led by workers. Our role in WWJ is to provide the tools and resources for workers to lead the charge on deciding their demands and create real change.

Where have you always wanted to travel and why?

Spain! Because I love their food.



JANNELLE WHITE

(she/her)

Director, TWUAP

What was your favorite thing you worked on/took part in this year?

The COVID-19 education, awareness and resources spearheaded by the CCDPH worker protection program. Collectively, we were able to provide PPE, empower workers, organize around workplace issues and amplify the grievances of essential warehouse and factory workers, including temp workers.

What speech (real or fictional) or person inspires you in your work and why?

The manifesto in Jerry Maquire. It was a classic, albeit fictional, pushback against corporate greed and prioritizing profit over people.



KAREN ALVAREZ

(she/her)

Eviction Prevention Intake Specialist

What was a highlight of your past year at WWJ?

The highlight of my past year was joining the Outreach team in April; meeting passionate, like minded individuals who are fighting to end inequality in our communities.

What are you looking forward to in 2022?

I look forward to helping tenants learn about their rights, prevent family displacement as well as fighting unjust treatment from landlords. Also, empowering workers to unionize, fight for equality and enforcing fair labor practices at warehouses.



KENDRA LANDFAIR

(she/her)

Worker Center Organizer

What person inspires you in your work and why?

It will always be Malcolm X, for me. His love and dedication for our people along with his intelligence, discipline and community organizing & oratorical skills are all things that I admire about him and aspire to gain as I grow more in this work.

What are you looking forward to in 2022?

I'm looking forward to new opportunities to learn and grow!



KRYSTAL GARCIA CENTENO

(she/her)

Operations and Finance Manager

What was a highlight of your past year at WWJ?

I am very proud to have transitioned out of an organizing role and taken on a brand new role within the organization as Operations and Finance Manager. I've gotten to explore new interests, learn new skills, and challenge myself like never before!

What does building worker power mean to you, and how do you live that out in your work?

To me, worker power means centering marginalized people, prioritizing accessibility, redistributing wealth, and abolishing abusive systems. As someone who plays many administrative roles at WWJ, I try to foster a sense of community and inclusion through workplace culture.



MADISON LISLE

(she/they)

Transit Justice Organizer

What was a highlight of your past year at WWJ?

Working with our Environmental Justice Leadership Committee (EJLC) to plan and hold community events and actions was a highlight of my 2021 work. It is such an honor to organize at the intersections of environmental and labor issues alongside such a driven group of people!

Where have you always wanted to travel and why?

I have always wanted to travel to the Philippines to visit and stay with all of my family members who still live there.



MARCOS CENICERROS

(he/him)

Executive Director

What would you like people to know about your job that they might not know?

My job requires creativity for how to build worker power and win campaigns, which means I get to work in some very interesting spaces with very smart and passionate people.

What are you looking forward to in 2022?

I'm looking forward to more actions at warehouses and working with more worker leaders as they build power with their co-workers and warehouses across Cook and Will Counties.

**MARK BALENTINE**

(he/him)

Worker Protection Organizer

What are you looking forward to in 2022?

I'm looking for WWJ to organize some of these warehouses and really get into what these people are going through. Not just only with COVID-19, but with a number of things that the warehouse worker has to put up with. I would like to see us get more in-depth with people.

What has been your theme song this past year?

My theme song has been Marvin Sapp's "The Best in Me."

**NADIA SPOCK**

(she/her)

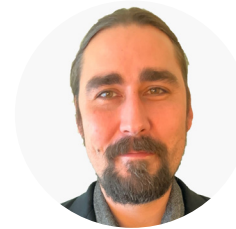
Individual Giving Manager

What was a highlight of your past year at WWJ?

Getting to know my amazing coworkers has been the best part of my first year at WWJ. It's a privilege to be able to grow and learn from them. The passion they bring to their organizing inspires me to be a better fundraiser, because at the end of the day, I want WWJ to have the means to autonomously support the goals and initiatives of warehouse workers, my coworkers, and the communities we organize with.

Where have you always wanted to travel and why?

I've always wanted to go on a huge cross country roadtrip, and at some point visit every state. There's so much to see and experience in a country as geographically and culturally diverse as the US.

**NICHOLAS DOMBERG**

(he/him)

Worker Protection Organizer

What does building worker power mean to you, and how do you live that out in your work?

Hearing out workers' specific issues, educating workers on their rights, and supporting efforts to change the logistics and manufacturing industries for the better. Safety and a living wage should not be out of reach for the workers that literally make our economy function.

What has been your theme song this past year?

A song that continues to lend me dedication to the work we do is "The Ghost of Tom Joad," as performed by Rage Against the Machine (written by Bruce Springsteen).

**RICHARD GABRINTINA**

(he/they)

Digital Organizer

If you ever wrote a book, what would it be about?

The plight and power of Filipinos in America.

What has been your theme song this past year?

"fafo" by Zack Fox.



TOMMY CARDEN

(he/him)

Food Worker Lead Organizer

If you ever wrote a book, what would it be about?

A social history of my bagpipe band, the Shannon Rovers.

What are you looking forward to in 2022?

I'm looking forward to supporting food workers on the Food Worker Justice committee to identify a set of target food warehouses. From this, I look forward to supporting workers on at least one worker-led campaign around workplace issues.



VIOLETA THOMPSON

(she/they)

Community Health Navigator

What person inspires you in your work and why?

Alan Watts inspires me in my work because his philosophies are applicable from various perspectives.

What has been your theme song this past year?

“Evergreen” by Lil Seyi.



YANA KALMYKA

(she/they)

Labor & Environmental Justice Director

What was a highlight of your past year at WWJ?

Working closely with our Environmental Justice Leadership Committee, composed of young people – mainly current and former warehouse workers – from Will County who are doing incredible work to educate and activate their neighbors around the fight for clean air, affordable water, and good, green jobs.

What book do you wish you could hand out on street corners?

Robin Kelley’s ‘Freedom Dreams.’ This book chronicles an amazing (and accessible!) history of powerful organizing within the Black Radical Tradition and makes the case for one of the most important organizing tools in existence –the radical imagination, or the capacity to imagine a world of radical care that is dramatically different & better than the systems we’ve inherited.



ZHENYA POLOZOVA

(she/her)

Green New Deal Coordinator

What was your favorite thing you worked on/took part in this year?

My favorite thing that I’ve taken part in this year has been canvassing in Joliet about rising water rates, hearing from residents about how tripling water rates will impact their lives, connecting the rising water rates to the proliferation of the warehousing industry in Joliet, and bringing them into the campaign for affordable water.

What person inspires you in your work and why?

Jane McAlevey inspires me because of her incredible dedication to organizing workers, the educational books she’s produced on the subject, and the powerful labor victories she has played a role in.

THANK YOU TO OUR
FUNDERS, FRIENDS, AND ALLIES

WWJ thanks the following funders who made our work possible in 2021.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois
Chicago Bar Foundation
Chicago Foundation for Women
Chicago Region Food Systems Fund
Cook County Department of Public Health
Emergent Fund
Energy Foundation
Field Foundation
Food and Farm Communications Fund
Green New Deal Coalition
HEAL Food Alliance
Illinois Access to Justice Coalition
Illinois Department of Public Health
Illinois Equal Justice Foundation
Illinois Public Health Foundation
Institute for Local Self-Reliance
Jobs with Justice
Norman Foundation
Raise the Floor Alliance
Solidaire Network
United for Respect
Will County Health Department
Woods Fund of Chicago

We would also like to thank all the individuals who supported our emergency fundraiser following the shooting at our office this summer, our fall fundraiser, and our holiday party and fundraiser in December. We offer a special thank-you to all supporters who have committed to a monthly recurring donation - even a \$5 monthly gift helps sustain our work.

WWJ is grateful to all our allies and partners in the fight for worker power.

Active Transportation Alliance
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council
Chicago Federation of Labor
Chicago Food Policy Action Committee
Chicago Jobs with Justice
Chicagoland Vaccine Partnership
CMRJB Workers United
Environmental Defense Fund
Raise the Floor Alliance and our fellow worker centers
HEAL Food Alliance
Herrera Strategy
Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Illinois Green New Deal Coalition
Illinois Environmental Coalition
Illinois Sierra Club
Joliet Junior College
Lewis University
Machinists Local 126
National Employment Law Project (NELP)
No to Northpoint
Moving Forward Network
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church
Partners for Dignity and Rights
Prairie State Legal Services
Restaurant Opportunities Center
Respiratory Health Association
Shriver Center for Poverty Law
Spanish Community Center
Sunrise Chicago
Sunrise Joliet
Temp Worker Justice
UIC Law
United African Organization
Westside Justice Center



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NOTHING MOVES WITHOUT US

