

Workers' Rights

The WORKERS' RIGHTS team empowers, advocates for, and defends the rights of workers so that all jobs in North Carolina are good jobs—and that North Carolinians can take time off from work when they need it and have dignity when out of work.



OUR 2025 PRIORITIES

Enforce Existing Workplace Protections

- Litigate on behalf of agricultural, contingent, and other low-wage workers to expand rights and protections, win compensation for employees whose rights were violated, and deter bad actor employers.
- Ensure that labor agencies, including the N.C. and U.S. Departments of Labor, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and National Labor Relations Board, aggressively enforce workers' rights through strong investigations and accountability to workers.
- Educate workers on existing protections regarding wages, workplace safety, and discrimination, and train workers on their right to engage in concerted activity, ResolveTrafficDebtNC.org.

Advocate for Pro-worker Policies

- Coordinate coalition work to build public support and momentum for a family-friendly workplace policy agenda that includes paid sick and safe days, paid family medical leave, and a livable minimum wage.
- Encourage local governments to adopt policies that ensure access to paid leave and living wages for municipal employees.
- Grow public support to repair the damage policymakers made to the state's unemployment benefits program in 2013 and promote adoption of work-sharing policy.

- Support efforts of national partners to impact unemployment insurance changes at the federal level.

Advocate for Safer and Healthier Workplaces

- Push for a requirement that all employers have a safety plan that prioritizes the health and safety of their employees when emergencies arise.
- Demand common-sense heat stress protections so that there are no more avoidable deaths due to heat on the job.
- Build public awareness and legislative support for legislation to protect migrant farmworkers and improve housing conditions.

Build Worker Power

- Support unionization and organizing efforts around the state by providing research and other resources and amplifying campaign messages.
- Engage more working people in the creation of policies at the local, state, and federal levels by sharing opportunities to participate in rulemaking and development of legislation and elevating the voices of directly impacted people in spaces where policy decisions are made.
- Build the long-term capacity of the worker movement in the state by subgranting funds to coalition partners and providing organizing, communications, policy, and legal support.

OUR RECENT WINS

In 2024, we continued to utilize legal action, education, and advocacy to advance pro-worker policies and empower workers.



- Published *State of Working NC 2024: The Cost of Inaction*, highlighting workers' stories and showing the multibillion-dollar cost of failing to implement policies like paid leave, unemployment reform, livable wages, and childcare funding. The report serves as a guide for advancing pro-worker policies in North Carolina.
- Expanded and improved the "We Work We Vote" platform to connect voters with workplace issues, simplify civic engagement, and raise awareness on economic justice, especially during times of crisis.
- Filed complaints and litigated cases for farmworkers and food processing workers facing wage theft, human trafficking, sexual assault, discrimination, and retaliation for asserting their rights.
- Hosted workshops and created materials to educate workers about their rights, including how to challenge unfair practices and protect themselves from unsafe conditions.
- Helped 24 immigrant workers apply for deferred action and employment authorization, offering

Core Strategies and Approaches

- **Enforce workers' rights and workplace protections** through litigation, deterring unlawful employment practices.
- **Promote policies that create better jobs with living wages, safety, work-life balance, and adequate benefits** for both employed and unemployed workers.
- **Build worker power** by providing low-wage workers with the tools and resources to enforce their rights, improve workplaces, and influence policymakers

them legal work status, driver's licenses, credit access, and deportation protection. Assisted additional workers through referrals and a community clinic.



LET'S WORK TOGETHER to end poverty, build power, and share prosperity across North Carolina!

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