

**The following are former grantees of Jewish Funds for Justice that organize around issues of a fair, minimum and/or living wage. Please note that some of this information may be out-of-date. Please check their websites for current information.**

**Organization:** Garment Workers Center  
**Location:** Los Angeles, CA

The Garment Workers Center (GWC) is a multiethnic, multilingual organization led by garment workers in the greater Los Angeles area. It was started as a collaboration between Sweatshop Watch, Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), Korean Immigrant Workers Association (JFJ grantee), and Asian Pacific American Law Center (APALC). GWC was established in the aftermath of the El Monte slavery case involving Thai immigrant garment workers, and the unsuccessful unionization campaign led by UNITE against GUESS manufacturing. California's garment manufacturing is a \$24 billion industry; Los Angeles has over 4500 garment factories employing 90,000 workers. A recent Department of Labor survey found that 67% of the factories have wage violations and 75% violate health and safety laws. Less than 1% of garment workers belong to a union.

GWC estimates it has won over \$1.5 million in owed wages for workers since 2001. In the last two years, GWC has won three legal settlements against major retail manufacturers: Forever 21, Bebe, and Wet Seal. The settlements are the culmination of large-scale mobilization, consumer boycotts and intense negotiations between workers, the retail companies and their subcontractors.

**Organization:** Brazilian Immigrant Center  
**Location:** Brighton, MA

Established in 1995 by Brazilian immigrants, BIC provides grassroots education, organizing and workplace advocacy to Boston-area Brazilians. The center is staffed and directed by Brazilian immigrant workers. The Brazilian immigrant community in the Boston area is large and growing; it is estimated to be over 200,000 people. BIC is well known and well respected within and outside their community. It is the primary organization that Brazilian immigrants turn to for help and each year they receive close to 10,000 walk-in visitors and telephone requests for guidance and referrals. BIC's ongoing work includes:

- Help to low-wage workers to recover back wages, win workers' compensation, and fight discrimination and harassment. In 2004, BIC recovered \$115,000 in back wages.
- BIC teaches workers about their rights, refers potentially precedent-setting cases to legal assistance, and helps workers organize within their workplace.
- Provides English language classes.
- Educates Brazilian immigrants on citizenship, immigration law, green card acquisition, apprenticeship programs, health care, and taxes.

- Participates in coalition campaigns for amnesty for undocumented immigrants and increased immigrant access to driver's licenses and higher education.

**Organization:** Chinese Progressive Association

**Location:** San Francisco, CA

Founded in 1972, Chinese Progressive Association (CPA) has engaged in community organizing and education concerning health and environmental issues, workers' rights, housing, and immigrant rights, as well as worked to improve the living conditions of low-income immigrants. Based in San Francisco's Chinatown, CPA has developed programs and campaigns designed to give community residents a stronger voice in the decision-making processes that affect them. CPA is a membership-based organization with approximately 1,200 dues-paying members, mostly working-class Chinese immigrants from teenagers to seniors. Current programs include the Workers Organizing Center, a Housing Justice campaign, and a collaborative youth organizing project with PODER, a Latino environmental and economic justice organization in the Mission district.

CPA's recent accomplishments include:

- In 2004, CPA created new systems of support for dislocated garment workers that improved the accessibility and effectiveness of transitional employment services available through the Federal Trade Adjustment Act. As a result, over 400 dislocated garment workers, mostly middle-aged to older monolingual Chinese-speaking women, were able to obtain up to 18 months of income support totaling over \$4 million and vocational retraining services valued at over \$2 million.
- In 2003, CPA played a leading role in building a community labor coalition that won a local ballot initiative that increased the minimum wage to \$8.50 per hour for all workers in San Francisco. As a result, over 50,000 of San Francisco's poorest working families, 40% of whom are Asian American, will increase their annual income by an average of \$2,000. CPA co-chaired the coalition's Steering Committee and mobilized hundreds of Asian-American workers throughout the campaign.
- From 2001-2002, CPA organized 240 laid-off immigrant garment workers to recover over \$1 million in back wages and helped to create a new model of collaborative wage and hour law enforcement with the state labor agency.
- From 2000-2001, CPA organized 225 laid-off immigrant electronic assembly workers to win a just settlement totaling over \$700,000 from their former employer and expanded unemployment and job re-training benefits from the federal government.

**Organization:** Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center

**Location:** Morristown, NJ

Wind of the Spirit (WOS) is an organization of immigrants, mostly from Central and Latin America, and non-immigrants in the Morristown, NJ area. WOS's mission is to provide assistance to immigrants so they can live with dignity and without exploitation, and to work in

solidarity with non-immigrants to improve conditions for all. In the past few years, increasing numbers of young immigrants, often single men, have relocated to suburban Central New Jersey for jobs in the service sector and day labor jobs in the landscaping and construction industries. However, these suburban towns are not equipped to deal with non-English speaking immigrants and as a result, WOS has had to provide many essential services, such as immigration counseling and referrals, ESL classes, workshops on a variety of immigration policies and changes, assisting workers with labor disputes and helping workers to win back wages. It has also helped the non-immigrant community deal with the sudden influx of Latino immigrants by organizing cultural and social events.

WOS's past activities and accomplishments include:

- Organized a Workers' Committee of Day Laborers (DL) to block the passage of a proposed Morristown ordinance that would have made it illegal to look for work on the streets.
- Organized regular workers' rights workshops, provided assistance and gained wages in labor disputes, as well as acted as a liaison with the local police department to address complaints.
- Reported eight contractors who were consistently violating worker health and safety laws or not paying wages. Recovered \$42,000 in back wages as a result of their organizing and ongoing relationship with New Jersey Department of Labor.
- Organized to ban guard dogs from the Passaic County Immigration Detention Center.

**Organization:** Massachusetts Jobs with Justice

**Location:** Jamaica Plain, MA

Mass JwJ is a labor community coalition that aims to bring community support to the union struggles of low-wage workers and to involve labor unions in larger struggles for social justice.

Mass JwJ has supported workers' efforts in the following campaigns:

- Mass JwJ was one of many community organizations that gave significant support to the SEIU 615 campaign to organize more than 10,000 janitors who clean more than 1,000 office buildings in downtown Boston and the suburbs. While the final settlement was only a partial victory, it did increase the wages of 11,000 low-wage janitors in commercial buildings by 27% for full-time and 30% for part-time workers, as well as provided health insurance for 1,000 part-time workers.
- Organized labor activists together with anti-globalization and safe-food activists to mobilize 200 people to a rally in support of the efforts of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), representing 6,000 grocery store workers employed by Star Market/Shaw's locations throughout Eastern Massachusetts.
- Supported Kayem Meatpacking workers in Chelsea, where UFCW is organizing low-income meatpackers who face dangerous working conditions and management that refuses to recognize their union.

**Organization:** Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates (KIWA)

**Location:** Los Angeles, CA

Founded in 1992, KIWA was one of the first groups in the country organizing both Korean and Latino immigrant workers. Its mission is to empower low-wage workers while developing a progressive constituency and leadership within the Korean-American community. KIWA's accomplishments include:

- In 1998, KIWA's Koreatown Restaurant Workers campaign organized to raise minimum-wage adherence in the restaurant industry from 41% to 97% in 1998. Korean and Latino restaurant workers have continued to organize resulting in the creation of the Restaurant Workers Association of Koreatown (RWAK). RWAK is a multi-ethnic membership organization of 350 low-wage workers in Koreatown's restaurant industry. The Association is part of KIWA but it now has its own staff and is working on a Minimum Wage Compliance Campaign to address the continued minimum wage and overtime violations.
- In January of 2004, the Los Angeles Health Department closed the meat department of the Koreatown supermarket Assi Market for two days. The market is the primary target of the Market Workers Justice Campaign and KIWA used the closing as an opportunity to establish a consumer rights' committee, Committee for a Healthy Fair Koreatown. The Committee filed a consumer lawsuit in February 2004 alleging that Assi Market engages in deceptive business practices including selling spoiled products, removing expiration dates from products, and allowing rodent infestation and improper food handling.
- The Market Workers Justice Campaign, for which KIWA is requesting funding, was launched in 2001 and is their latest effort to improve the working conditions of Asian and Latino workers. There are a total of 13 supermarkets that serve customers in Koreatown and surrounding suburban neighborhoods. Owned by 5-6 Korean American families, the stores are extremely profitable and employ over 1,000 workers. Most workers make minimum wage and do not have health benefits, pay raises, job security or grievance procedures.

**Organization:** Florida ACORN/Miami Chapter

**Location:** Miami, FL

Florida ACORN is a multi-issue grassroots organization of low- and moderate-income members. Like other ACORN chapters, Florida ACORN combines work on smaller, local issues like trash removal and street lighting with larger statewide issues like education and wages. Founded in 1995, Florida ACORN has 4,000 members in 16 chapters statewide, with offices in St. Petersburg, Tampa, Orlando, Miami, Ft. Lauderdale and Palm Beach.

Florida is the fourth largest state with almost 16 million residents, over 31% of who are African American and Latino. Almost 18% of Florida's population is over 65 years of age, the largest proportion of senior citizens anywhere in the country. High levels of poverty and unemployment characterize the communities that ACORN organizes. 12.5% of Floridians live in poverty and the rates in ACORN cities are higher; 28.5 % of Miami residents in Orlando, 13.3% in St. Petersburg and 18% of Tampa residents live in poverty.

Recent accomplishments include:

- Successfully leading a coalition that won \$20 billion in state fiscal relief, including \$941 million for Florida. ACORN worked in partnership with SEIU and other community organizations in the national Put Families First Coalition;
- Running a free tax preparation clinic and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) enrollment program in Miami. ACORN helped over 1,500 families receive free tax assistance, EITC benefits and/or the Child Tax Credit;

Last year, ACORN collected more than 950,000 signatures to get a minimum wage initiative on the November 2004 ballot. The ballot initiative seeks to raise the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$6.15 per hour. This campaign has drawn unprecedented attention to Florida, the 2000 election debacle notwithstanding. Labor unions, community, faith-based and civil rights organizations, elected officials, and thousands of grassroots activists are uniting behind this campaign as a galvanizing strategy to increase voter participation by African-American, Latino, and low-wage workers.

**Organization:** Boston ACORN

**Location:** Boston, MA

Over the last decade, Boston ACORN has grown into one of the most successful ACORN chapters and one of the most effective grassroots organizations in Massachusetts. ACORN has expanded its organizing with 8,000 members in 13 chapters in Dorchester, Mattapan, East Boston, Chelsea, and Brockton. Like other ACORN chapters, Boston ACORN combines work on smaller, local issues like trash removal and road repair with larger city- and state-wide issues like education and wages. ACORN has developed successful working relationships with community organizations and labor unions, including the Greater Boston Labor Council and Mass. AFL-CIO. Alone and with its allies, ACORN has succeeded in:

- Passing the Boston Jobs and Living Wage Ordinance in 1997, and strengthening it in 2001-2. The measure currently requires that companies with at least 25 employees, receiving city contracts, tax breaks or other assistance worth at least \$25,000, must pay their workers at least \$10.93 per hour.
- Raising the state minimum wage with the state AFL-CIO to \$6.75/hour in 1999 over the opposition of the powerful Speaker of the House.
- Raising the state earned income tax credit by 50%.
- Assisting 3,000 families in receiving home loans.
- Restoring \$15 million in budget cuts to Boston Public Schools in 2002.
- Winning two settlements with Household Finance, the largest and most egregious of predatory lenders: a \$100 million settlement between Household and national ACORN, and a \$480 million settlement between Household and the Attorneys General from 30 states. ACORN played a key role in getting the Attorneys General to take up the suit against Household. The ACORN settlement will bring \$2 million and the Attorneys General settlement will bring \$14 million for Household's victims in Massachusetts.

**Organization:** Coalition of Immokalee Workers  
**Location:** Immokalee, FL

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) is an independent farmworker organization based in Southwest Florida, in the state's largest farmworker community. The membership is largely composed of immigrants from Haitian, Mayan and Latino backgrounds who spend eight to nine months per year in Florida, then travel north during the summer months' harvest. All of the main crops that the farmworkers harvest—citrus, watermelon and tomatoes—are controlled by large grower cooperatives and corporations that set prices and determine wages.

CIW's long-term goals are to help low-wage workers build their power and modernize agricultural labor relations. To achieve this, CIW combines community education, leadership development, labor rights advocacy and community organizing to end abuse against undocumented workers; win fair wages and more respect from the bosses, owners and, increasingly, the corporations that benefit from the production of the food farmworkers harvest; secure better and cheaper housing; garner stronger enforcement of laws that protect workers rights; support the right of workers to organize; bring modern-slavers to justice and end trafficking and servitude in agriculture. CIW's work has garnered significant national and international media attention, including recent stories in the *New Yorker*, *National Geographic*, CNN/Reuters, and the BBC.

CIW's victories include:

- Preventing a wage cut for tomato pickers in 1995 through a five-day general strike by thousands of workers.
- Winning the first increase in rates for tomato pickers in 20 years in 1997, following work stoppages organized by CIW.
- Discovering, investigating and pressuring for the successful prosecution of five major cases of slavery, including the 2002 case of three crew-leaders from Lake Placid, FL who were convicted of forcing 700 workers into slave labor, sentenced to a total of 34.9 years in prison and ordered to forfeit \$3 million in proceeds from their immigrant smuggling operation.
- Winning a class-action lawsuit against a citrus company that owed millions of dollars of back wages to thousands of workers.