



Jobs With Justice Worker Solidarity Fund Impact Report

Expanding the Mutual Aid Movement and Helping Workers in Crisis

MAY 2021



Launching the Worker Solidarity Fund

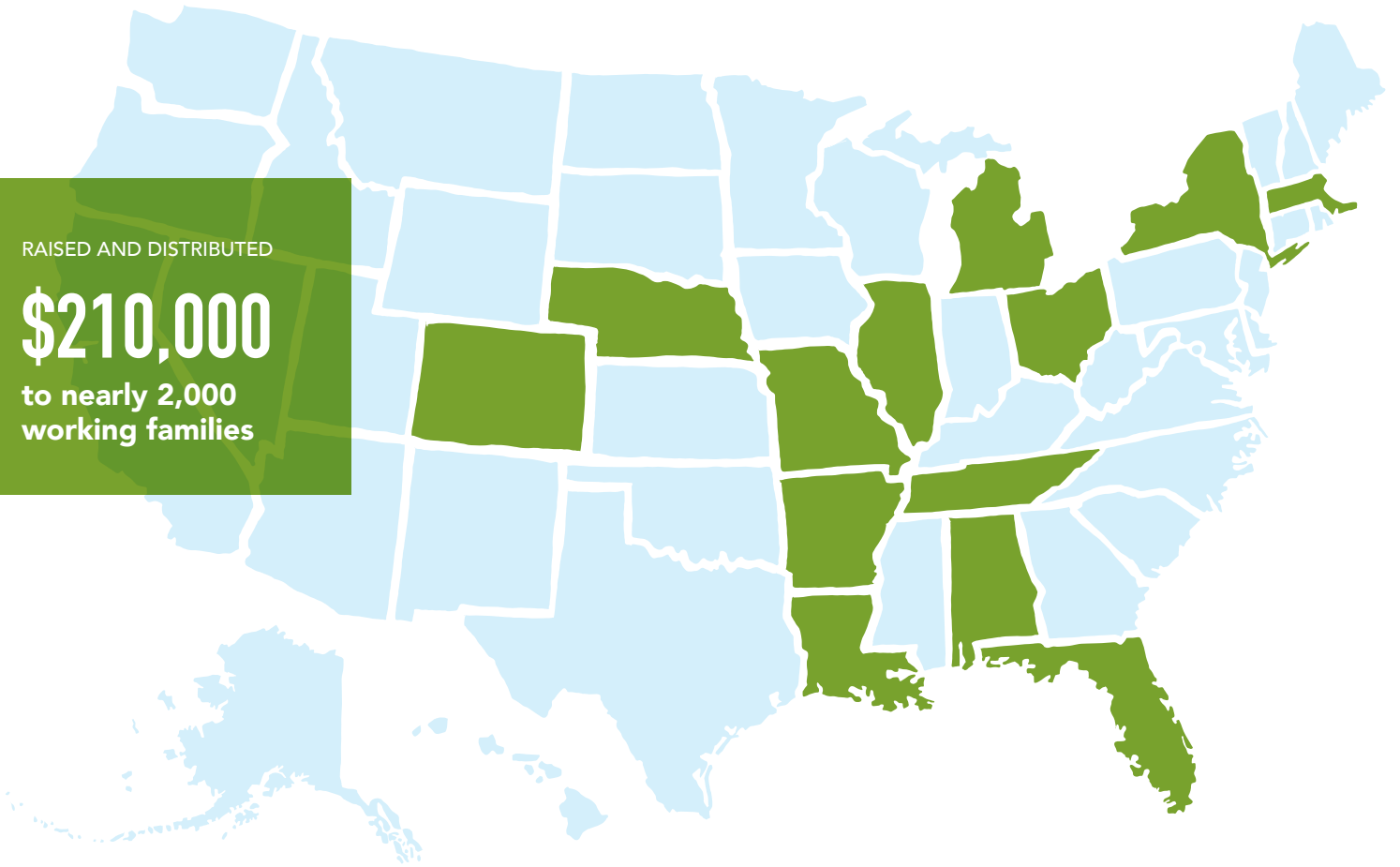
The pandemic created an economic crisis, with millions unemployed and in need of assistance. Federal financial relief left many recipients still in desperate need of adequate funds to pay rent, put food on the table and maintain access to life-saving medication. Further, millions of undocumented workers were excluded from government relief programs altogether. In response, a mutual aid movement sprang up nationwide.

To invigorate and expand the movement, National Jobs With Justice launched the **Worker Solidarity Fund** in April 2020. The Fund was launched with guidance and oversight from worker-leaders from the most impacted sectors, with the purpose of raising and redistributing much-needed dollars to out-of-work people, especially undocumented families excluded from other forms of relief. We designed the fund in line with our theory of change and our vision for a worker-led economic democracy. As detailed below, funds raised were regranting to local organizations who contribute directly to individuals in need.

RAISED AND DISTRIBUTED

\$210,000

to nearly 2,000
working families



The Fund's Impact

To date, the Worker Solidarity Fund alone has raised and distributed \$210,000 to nearly 2,000 working families via local efforts around the country, through emergency funds set up by Jobs With Justice coalitions and other local groups. Collectively, the Worker Solidarity Fund, combined with all our Jobs With Justice local funds, have contributed **more than \$2 million in direct relief** to workers in struggling industries like gig work, retail, hospitality, farm work, domestic work and more.

We saw local coalitions stepping up in various ways in their communities, including leveraging city and state money and creating mutual aid funds to support their community

members in need of help during the crisis. **Tompkins County Worker Center** set up a mutual aid fund to help workers with rent, medication, utility bills and groceries. **Long Island Jobs With Justice** created the Long Island Jobs With Justice Solidarity Fund to provide immigrant families with emergency financial assistance. **Missouri Jobs With Justice** raised money and regranted to three funds, St. Louis Mutual Aid, Kansas City Radical Solidarity Fund and Columbia Mutual Aid, all which focus on providing financial assistance to members of their communities. **DC Jobs With Justice** and **Jobs With Justice San Francisco** led victorious campaigns for millions of dollars in emergency city and state funding dedicated specifically to excluded and undocumented families. The select stories below paint a vivid picture of the meaningful impact these contributions are making in the lives of people.



NATIVE LANGUAGES OF WORKERS RECEIVING SUPPORT

Amharic
Arabic
Bosnian
Cape Verdean Creole
Chichewa
English
French
Haitian Creole
Kifuliru

18

Korean
Kurundi
Oromo
Portuguese
Somali
Spanish
Swahi
Vietnamese
Wolof





Direct relief to workers in struggling industries like:

Agriculture workers
 Club and Show Performers
 Commercial Cleaning
 Construction
 Domestic Work
 Farmworkers
 Gig work
 Hair Stylists
 Healthcare

Hospitality
 Janitorial/Cleaners
 Landscaping
 Meat Packers
 Packing Plant Workers
 Retail
 Sanitation Workers
 Seafood processing



Supporting Striking Sanitation Workers in New Orleans

You would be hard pressed to think of a more essential community role than that of sanitation workers. In New Orleans, these workers are disproportionately Black men, and during the height of the pandemic, in May 2020, many of them went on strike to address long-standing issues.

The New Orleans City Waste Union strike was launched that spring in response to lack of proper workplace protections, inadequate wages and poor treatment from the Metro Disposal Services facility management and ownership. The sanitation workers also demanded \$250 weekly stipends due to the increased danger from COVID exposure.

The strike has lasted for months in large part due to the solidarity and support these workers received from their larger community and with help from the Worker Solidarity Fund. **“What the Worker Solidarity Fund grant did was it empowered them [sanitation workers] to have the**



Photo by New Orleans City Waste Union

ability to stay on strike longer, it allowed them to go in and say, ‘We don’t need your money, we want you to meet our demands,’ says Daytrian Wilkens, spokesperson for the City Waste Union. Many of the striking workers have been able to secure better jobs elsewhere, with higher pay and more protections, while others continue the fight.

This ongoing struggle for fair wages and better work standards reflects a larger struggle for economic justice taking place in the Big Easy. “The strike was about saying: we live in a city that is majority Black, but poverty ridden. How do you reconcile that? How do you live in a city where the median income is \$30,000, but the lowest cost to purchase a home in the city is \$200,000?” Wilkens points out.

New Orleans is largely known for food, Mardi Gras, and music. The connective tissue that binds all three is the city’s workforce, including the sanitation workers who take on an often-dangerous job to ensure that residents and visitors have a healthy experience. Jobs With Justice is proud to honor their role and their struggle through the Worker Solidarity Fund.



Photo by International Labor Media Network



Photo by Massachusetts Jobs With Justice—MassUndocuFund

Helping Undocumented Workers Excluded from Federal Relief

Claudia, originally from Central America, has called Massachusetts home for over 16 years. During the COVID pandemic, Claudia faced many struggles, including losing her job as a family caregiver and being forced to stay home to care for her two children as they attended school remotely.

Like many other undocumented workers, she was excluded from government financial assistance throughout the COVID pandemic. She relied only on the support of her community and loved ones and the assistance of MassUndocuFund, one of the mutual aid efforts supported through the Worker Solidarity Fund.

Claudia stumbled upon MassUndocuFund when a friend of hers successfully received aid from the fund and encouraged her to do the same. After Claudia applied for assistance herself, the phone rang. She was hesitant to take a call from a private number because of her pending bills and the increased number of spam calls, but she nonetheless answered and felt a great relief to hear her family would be receiving assistance.

In the end, the assistance provided by the MassUndocuFund proved to be a great help, as she was able to buy groceries and pay some bills. Claudia is one of the thousands of people that MassUndocuFund has provided financial assistance to during the pandemic.

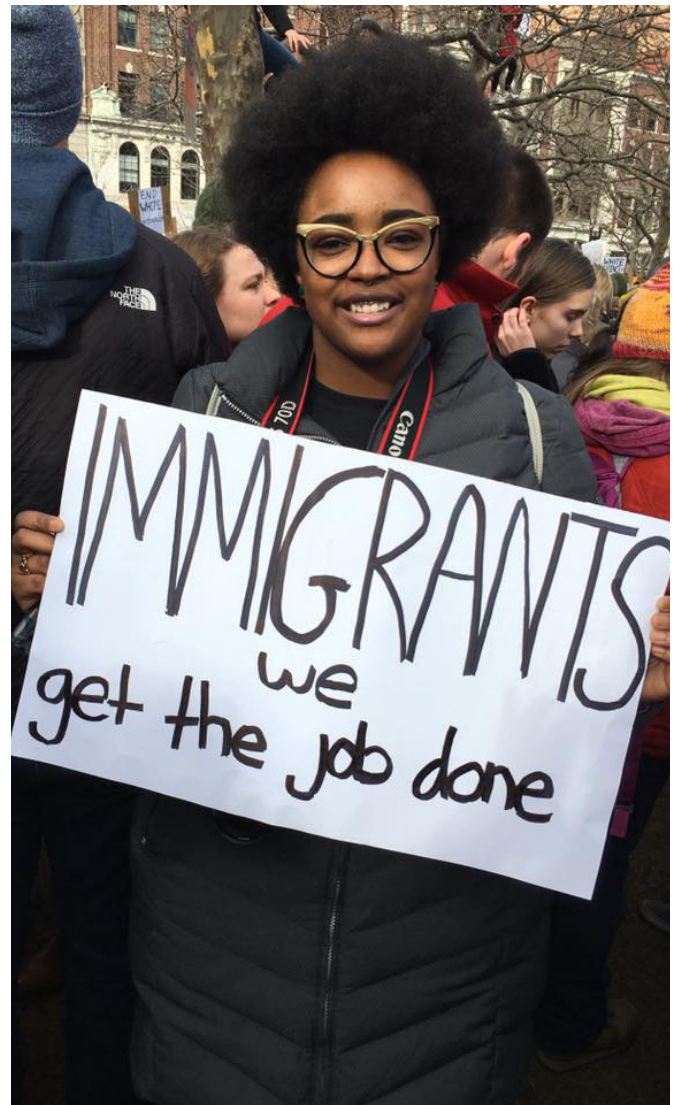


Photo by Massachusetts Jobs With Justice—MassUndocuFund

Supporting Workers in Need Beyond the Pandemic

The Worker Solidarity Fund, and all the funds set up by the Jobs With Justice network, proved critical in ensuring that working families could survive the pandemic and economic crisis. Moving forward, the Fund will continue to support workers in need, whether they are affected by natural disasters and other crises or taking action against unjust employers. We will continue to strengthen our existing mutual aid networks in a way that builds long-term power for workers everywhere—especially low-wage workers of color and other communities intentionally excluded from federal and state relief. Your support of the Worker Solidarity Fund is how we continue to fight for the future we want: a society in which all workers have collective bargaining rights, a decent standard of living, and a voice in the workplace.

Worker Solidarity Fund Recipients

- Adelante Alabama Worker Center (affiliate of Southeast Immigrant Rights Network)
- Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice (affiliate of Southeast Immigrant Rights Network)
- Farmworker Association of Florida, Inc. (FWAF)
- Haitian Bridge Alliance/Black Immigrants Bail Fund
- Service Industry Coalition Knoxville (SICK)
- The City Waste Union
- The Worker Center for Racial Justice
- Us Helping Us New Orleans
- Venceremos-George's Striking Workers
- We Count!
- Workers' Dignity/Dignidad Obrera (affiliate of Southeast Immigrant Rights Network)
- Central Florida Jobs with Justice
- Cleveland Jobs with Justice
- Colorado Jobs with Justice
- East Tennessee Jobs With Justice
- Long Island Jobs with Justice
- Massachusetts Jobs with Justice
- Missouri Jobs with Justice
- Tompkins County Worker Center