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Center for Innovation in Worker Organization (CIWO)

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[Center for Innovation in Worker Organization \(CIWO\)](#)

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About Us

Social movements require strong and diverse organizations, skilled leadership to envision change, dedicated and growing membership base to demand it, and cultures that move innovative strategies and

- Our Team
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- CIWO News
- Bargaining for the Common Good
- Build the Bench
- Women Innovating Labor Leadership (WILL) Empower
- Innovation Seeding Transformation Program
- Transformative Global Leadership Program

structures that are rooted in racial, gender, and economic justice. The Center for Innovation in Worker Organization (CIWO) was created in 2014 to support worker and community organizations in these challenges. CIWO is a space where labor and community connect; where new research, ideas and strategies are shared and scrutinized; and where leaders and staff at all levels can refine their skills and develop new ones. To find more out more about CIWO's approach to this work, click below.

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST >

VIEW OUR NEWSLETTER >

**LEARN MORE ABOUT CIWO
HERE** >

Our Programs

Our Supporters

- [AFSCME](#)
- [Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools](#)
- [American Federation of Teachers](#)
- [Arca Foundation](#)
- [Berger-Marks Foundation](#)
- [California Labor Commission](#)



**Bargaining
for the
Common
Good (BCG)**



**WILL
Empower**



**Build the
Bench**



- Center for Popular Democracy
- Century Fund
- Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations
- Ford Foundation
- Institute for Policy Studies
- Jobs With Justice
- Kalmanovitz Initiative at Georgetown University
- Ms.Foundation
- Nathan Cummings Foundation
- National AFL-CIO
- National Black Worker Center Project
- National Domestic Workers Alliance
- National Education Association
- National Employment Law Project
- National Guest Workers Alliance
- New Jersey Education Association
- Partnership for Working Families

Transformative Global Leadership Program

CIWO Fellows

Innovation Seeding Transformation Program

Honoring Black History by Supporting Black Futures



This Black History Month, CIWO is highlighting the **National Black**

Worker Center (NBWC) campaign for the **Black Worker Bill of Rights**. NBWC has a number of ways for you to connect with this campaign on their [website](#). This policy platform is centered on "build[ing] a new anti-racist economy that works for everyone" and demands "10 rights be meaningfully reflected in the law and enforced." We encourage you to check out the Black Worker Bill of Rights and learn how you can support the future of Black workers.

- Refund America Project
- Restaurant Opportunities Centers United
- Roosevelt Institute
- Service Employees International Union
- Surdna Foundation
- UCLA Downtown Labor Center
- Veatch Program at Shelter Rock

Image copyright National Black Worker Center

This March We Are Celebrating 5 Years of WILL Empower Programming!

This year is the 5th anniversary of **WILL Empower Programs.**



One way we're celebrating this milestone is by reflecting on what WILL Empower participants have told us about their experiences in our programs:

'WILL Empower taught me the value of showing up as the whole me.'

'I realize that I have gifts to give in who I am and how I come to the work.'

'WILL Empower is about being unapologetic and unafraid.'

'I've never been in a leadership development space like this.'

Contact Us

Email: ciwo@smlr.rutgers.edu



'I've learned to be in the practice of asking for what I need.'

'This retreat was important to remind me why I'm in the position I'm in, about the power I have, and that I need to use it.'

'I've been in my workplace three years, and we've never had a discussion about race. I'm going to push for that discussion.'

[WILL Empower](#) is presenting the 2023 Edna Berger Young Courageous Leader Award in March to one young womxn leader who demonstrates a commitment to worker, racial, and gender justice. Look out for our announcement!

Sheri Davis on Lessons from the Chicago Teachers' Union



[Click here](#) to hear Sheri Davis speak about

leadership lessons learned from

the work of the Chicago Teachers' Union:

'It is not enough for us to talk about what everybody else needs to do...We actually have to unpack some of the reasons why we got to the places where we are as unions.'

[Click here for a transcript.](#)

Watch the full **Building a Movement for the Common Good roundtable**, held in November 2022 by Nonprofit Quarterly and Bargaining for the Common Good.

Making Hope and History Rhyme: A New Worker Movement from the Shell of the Old



In this December 2022 *New Labor Forum*

article, authors **Marilyn Sneiderman** and Stephen Lerner reflect on the lessons of the past half-century & assess the strategic challenges and opportunities confronting a new generation of workers, activists, and organizers.

[> Read the full article](#)

[> Listen to a discussion of the article on the Reinventing Solidarity Podcast](#)

Labor Rising: Is the Working Class Experiencing a New CIO Moment?



In this piece in *The Progressive Magazine* (

October 10, 2022), author Sarah Jaffe describes how the CIO benefited from the momentum generated by overlapping protest movements: tenant, immigrant, and anti-racist organizing, all in response to the massive crisis of the Great Depression. Against this background of desperation, the organizers of the 1930s were willing to put resources behind a new path for organizing. **Marilyn Sneiderman** says that is what unions and organizers should emulate. "This is a time for some massive experimentation, some radical risk-taking, pushing every boundary."

[> Read the full article](#)

Build the Bench Advisory Committee Gathers in Washington, DC



Members
of the
**Build the
Bench
Advisory
Committee**

e and CIWO gathered on Friday, September 9, 2022 in Washington, DC to strategize the future of Build the Bench. It was the first in person meeting for the Build the Bench program since the Annual Convening in July 2019.

[> Read more about the Meeting](#)

Announcing the "Building a Movement for the Common Good" Article Series

Bargaining for the Common Good (BCG) has partnered with the Nonprofit Quarterly (NPQ) on a new series of articles about BCG strategy and experiences from



those who are doing the work. NPQ is publishing a new article weekly through the end of

October.

> Read the first piece at NPQ, an Introduction to Bargaining for the Common Good.

> Click Here to access the ongoing series as new articles are published each week.

Always Essential Fellowship Launches September 2022



CIWO is partnering with United for Respect & the

Always Essential Coalition for the 2022 Always Essential Fellowship.

The goal of Always Essential Fellowship is to expose and challenge essential worker

leaders to learn new skills, tools, and power analyses that allow them to deepen their understanding of their roles in the larger labor movement and connect with one another to win campaigns that make concrete improvements in the lives of all essential workers. The fellowship will run from September 2022 – February 2023.

Bargaining for the Common Good: Ford Foundation is supporting SMLR's Center for Innovation in Worker Organization in the fight for racial and social justice.



Marilyn Sneiderman says Ford Foundation

n's support through the #OurSocialBond initiative enabled our Center for Innovation in Worker Organization, Georgetown's Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor, and Action Center on Race and the Economy to turbocharge Bargaining for the Common Good.

[> Click here to read more.](#)

CIWO Partners with CAWP for Womxn Political Directors Convening May 2022



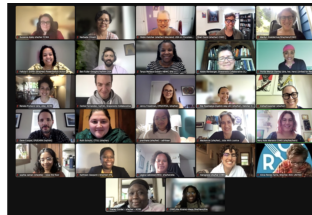
From May
22nd –
May 24th,
2022, past
and
current
Political

Directors and labor activists gathered at Rutgers University. CIWO partnered with the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) at the Rutgers University Eagleton Institute. Leaders from the following worker justice organizations were in attendance: SEIU 503, United Working Families, Chicago Teachers Union, Washington State Labor Council, The Workers Institute at Cornell University, SEIU 2015, SEIU International, Detroit Action, the Institute for Policy Studies, the NYC Central Labor Council, and AFSCME.

[> Click Here to Read More](#)

Build the Bench hosts 8th Annual Convening in May 2022

**"As always BTB renews,
refreshes, and affirms me
and I love it!"**



On May
19-20,
2022,
participant
s from

over 20 organizations came together virtually for our eighth annual Build the Bench Convening. This was our third time convening virtually, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

[> Click Here to Read More](#)

A Message from CIWO

Our hearts are heavy for the
people who were murdered,

those who were harmed, and the families and communities who are directly and indirectly impacted by recent mass shootings in Buffalo, NY and Laguna Woods, CA that occurred over the weekend. We also stand with the more than 1 million people who marched for the right to privacy and for protections for all pregnant people to make choices for their future.

The right to an abortion AND the right to live free from patriarchal violence and white supremacy are all labor issues. We at CIWO believe that racial justice cannot solely be about responding to national crises. Race and gender justice is the practice of making connections that expose and eradicate racism and sexism in our communities, our workplaces, and our movements. Racial justice and gender justice should be centered in all the work, all the time, within all forms of worker justice organizations that make up our movements.

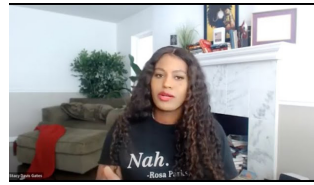
In this time of grieving and prolonged mourning, we encourage folks to pause and reflect; to feel the weight of what is happening in this moment. We cannot continue to push forward as if these attacks on our freedoms are isolated one-off

incidents. We cannot be (come) desensitized to violence, which is the bedrock of white supremacy and patriarchy. We cannot normalize political violence, which too often is perpetrated by men, and serves to destabilize the march towards justice and freedom! It is imperative that we investigate the ways that the members of our organizations and the diverse communities that we serve are traumatized and hurting. In labor, we must work to remedy these injuries through storytelling, power-building and by leveraging the strength of our institutions for lasting transformation towards a multiracial economic feminist democracy.

If you or someone that you are in network with workers at a TOPS grocery stores in NY State, UFCW Local 1 is offering free counseling. [Please see their post linked here to access services.](#)

Black History - Black Futures

**A Conversation with
Stacy Davis
Gates, Chicago
Teachers Union**



CIWO is proud to share a recent collaboration

with the Labor Education Action Research Network (LEARN) that aims to honor Black history by imagining and cultivating Black futures.

This powerful conversation with our special guest, the dynamic **Stacy Davis Gates** (Vice President, Chicago Teachers Union - AFT Local 1), is a part of Rutgers SMLR's ongoing celebration of Black History Month and Black leadership in labor movements throughout history.

[> Click here to watch the video](#)

Strategies & Reflections from the Womxn's Leadership Symposium



WILL Empower hosted the first

Womxn's Labor Leadership Symposium & Awards on

September 30 and October 1, 2021. The Symposium featured the testimony and narrative of leaders across the country, including **Lauren Jacobs** of Power Switch Action; **Veronica Mendez-Moore** of Centro Trabajadores Unidos en la Lucha; **Sara Steffens** of Communications Workers; **Sarita Gupta** of the Ford Foundation, **Stacy Davis-Gates** of the Chicago Teachers Union; and **Tanya Wallace-Gobern** of the National Black Worker Center.

> [Click here to learn more about the Symposium](#)

CIWO Wins New Jersey Future of Work Accelerator Innovation Challenge

We are so proud and grateful to announce that CIWO is among the 19 winners selected for the inaugural cohort in the New Jersey Future of Work Accelerator Program, which will support us in growing our work and social impact in New Jersey. Read more at [Insider NJ](#) and [ROI-NJ](#).

CIWO Featured in Rutgers-New Brunswick Impact Report

CIWO's work helping organizations



incubate and launch innovative research agendas, strategies, and community/labor organizational programs resulting in stronger workers' organizations and greater economic and social equality was featured in the **Rutgers University Foundation Summer 2021 Impact Report.**

"Thanks to the Center for Innovation in Worker Organization, my peers and I began an energizing and much-needed dialogue on how we can begin to share what we know and are learning.... This is how we will win, together!"

— *Lauren Jacobs, executive director, Partnership for Working Families*

[< Read the complete report](#)

PROSPECTIVE
STUDENTS

CURRENT
STUDENTS

FACULTY &
STAFF

ALUMNI

ONLINE
LEARNING



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