

Abstract

The Public Justice Center (PJC) will address Wage Payment / Overtime / Misclassification among low-wage women workers in Maryland workers in industries with high rates of misclassification – including but not limited to direct care (home care, adult medical day care, medical transport, and small- to medium-sized assisted living facilities) and commercial and residential cleaning work – in order to improve women’s financial stability as well as that of their families and communities and to hold employers accountable for this harmful practice.

The project outcomes are: 1) a significant increase in knowledge among low-wage women workers in Maryland about independent contractor misclassification and its harms; 2) a significant increase in legal actions misclassified women workers take to recover unpaid wages and damages and gain employer-provided benefits; 3) a significant reduction in misclassification in the target population; and 4) a significant increase in receipt of public benefits for which workers are eligible. With a FARE grant, the PJC will:

- Produce in English and Spanish 1) a curriculum for workers’ rights trainings; 2) a one-page infographic highlighting the key points of the training; 3) a one-page infographic showing how and why workers should take steps to access all benefits for which they are eligible; 4) a brochure summarizing information on misclassification, employment benefits, and public benefits; 5) sharable graphics on misclassification for social media; and 6) a sharable video on misclassification for social media.

- Conduct in-person and virtual know-your-rights trainings for 1,550 women directly. The trainings will 1) focus on independent contractor misclassification, its harms, and remedies, 2) introduce the CASH Campaign of Maryland’s (CASH) and Maryland Hunger Solutions’ (MHS) benefits screening platforms and provide referrals to ensure training participants access all

available public benefits, and 3) explain how training participants can empower their coworkers and others in their communities by sharing their new knowledge of misclassification and benefits eligibility more broadly. These trainings will empower workers to share their knowledge of misclassification with an additional 3,000 community members.

- Partner with a variety of organizations that have longstanding trust with the target population – such as workforce development organizations, community colleges, unions, and community-based organizations – to disseminate educational information to host the know-your-rights trainings and disseminate educational information to women workers.
- Connect 1,550 women to CASH and MHS for public benefits screening services, helping at least 310 women receive public benefits for which they are eligible.
- Refer at least 150 women for legal services beyond the PJC’s practice areas or capacity and represent at least 75 women in group wage-theft lawsuits challenging misclassification and seeking to recover unpaid overtime and travel-time wages.
- Survey participants at the end of each training to determine whether they feel they have more knowledge and the tools to challenge violations of their workplace rights, and survey staff at organizations hosting the trainings about their observations of any changes in participants’ lives following the trainings.
- Follow up with training participants by phone, email, and/or text message 45, 90, and 180 days after the training to ask about participants’ work and benefits and to collect stories from women about how our outreach, education, and rights and benefits activities have improved their lives.

The PJC has commitments from CASH and MHS for benefits screenings. Both are committing staff time and expertise to the project but are not subrecipients.