



# Domestic Workers Standards Board

Presentation to Seattle City Council

May 4, 2021

# Introductions



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Candace Faber  
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Established in 2019 as part of Seattle's Domestic Workers Ordinance, the Domestic Workers Standards Board provides a place for domestic workers, employers, private households, worker organizations, and the public to consider and suggest ways to improve the working conditions of domestic workers.

# Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights

We the nannies, house cleaners, cooks, gardeners, cash paid home care aides,  
and other members of the Seattle Domestic Workers Alliance,  
joined by elected officials and other supporters, do hereby proclaim  
our support for the following Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights.

*Domestic workers deserve the same rights as all workers*  
including minimum wage, overtime, sick days, and protection from discrimination and sexual harassment.

*All employers must provide written contracts*  
so that workers know what to expect and can hold their employers accountable.

*Training must be accessible and workers paid appropriately*  
to reflect their skills and experience.

*Health care and retirement benefits*  
must be made available to all domestic workers.

*Domestic workers shall have the power*  
*to help set legally-binding industry standards*  
which achieve a living wage, protect health and safety, and contribute to workplace equity.

We hereby sign our names as initiators and supporters  
of this Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights.

*Lisa A. Herbold*

## What We Believe

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*The Domestic Workers Standards Board envisions a world where:*

- Domestic workers are informed and supported, and hiring entities are accountable and regulated;
- Better relationships are cultivated between workers and hiring entities across languages and cultures; and
- Policies are clear, consistently enforced, and meaningfully improve the lives of domestic workers

# Today's Presentation

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- ❑ Barriers to achieving our vision for domestic workers
- ❑ Recommendations for City Council to overcome barriers
- ❑ Immediate next steps



Since mid-2019,  
OLS has  
received  
only 15 worker  
inquiries,  
resulting in just  
**one**  
investigation.

Over the last two years, OLS and community partners have conducted hundreds of trainings and outreach events, as well as launched bus and radio ad campaigns.



# Barriers: Implementing the Domestic Workers Ordinance

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## *Reaching the community*

- Identifying domestic workers and hiring entities is difficult due to factors like language barriers and confusion about the ordinance
- Working in the shadows: domestic workers and hiring entities are not accustomed to regulation

## *Overcoming anxiety*

- Fear of impact on immigration status, job security, and future references

## *Communicating to a massive population*

- Tens of thousands of domestic workers and possibly hundreds of thousands of hiring entities





# Barriers: Current Working Conditions

## *Low Wages and No Benefits*

- More than half of domestic workers struggle to pay rent or other bills.
- Domestic workers go to work sick because they lack PTO and basic healthcare

## *Domestic Work During COVID-19*

- Domestic workers are essential workers: childcare providers, home health aides, cleaning and disinfecting homes
- Latinx people make up 34% of confirmed COVID-19 cases despite being 13% of the population
- Latinx patients are six times more likely to die from COVID-19

# Domestic Workers Standards Board Recommendations

- 1) Deeply invest in community expertise and building trust
- 2) Provide both targeted and scalable materials to domestic workers and hiring entities
- 3) Implement policy changes to improve the Domestic Workers Ordinance
- 4) Pass a right to portable paid time off for domestic workers





[Video link]

# 1) Invest in Community Expertise and Building Trust

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*Significantly expand funding for domestic worker outreach*

- Build on the trust of community partners who can reach vulnerable populations
- Close existing communication gaps, such as with the African and API communities

*Compensate workers for their expertise*

- Pay board members who are domestic workers
- Fund paid surveys and interviews of domestic workers to inform Board and OLS efforts



## 2) Provide More Materials and Resources to Workers and Hiring Entities

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*To reach hundreds of thousands of hiring entities - a scale that OLS is not funded for...*

- Publish, update, and disseminate clear online and printed materials, including a mailing to all households in Seattle
- Ensure that third-party platforms are compliant with the DWO

## 2) Provide More Materials and Resources to Workers and Hiring Entities

*To help address the devastating impact of lack of healthcare...*

- Provide resources for hiring entities to understand health care options for their workers
- Convene all relevant City departments to discuss creative options or program assistance to help workers gain access to care
- Push the state legislature to adopt an affordable health insurance option available to ALL in Washington State



### 3) Policy Changes to Improve the DWO

*To reach the community with clear information and empower more workers to access their rights...*

- Simplify worker and hiring entity coverage – eliminate exceptions
- Mandate that all hiring entities provide a notice of rights to their domestic workers, including third-party platforms
- Engage domestic workers when considering current legislation on independent contractor transparency



# 4) Right to Portable Paid Leave for Domestic Workers

*To ensure that Domestic Workers can afford to take the time they need to care for themselves and their loved ones...*



Domestic workers deserve a right to portable paid leave for paid sick days, rest days and other uses they may need.



Portable benefits are benefits that can be paid into or accrued from many hiring entities into one worker's account.



Portable paid leave for all domestic workers should be mandated and supported by strong, simple enforcement.

# 4) Right to Portable Paid Leave for Domestic Workers

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## The bad news

- 57% of domestic workers receive no benefits at all
- Only 36% receive paid sick time
- **Workers report that they regularly go to work when they are sick**



## The good news

- 87% of employers support paid sick time for domestic workers and 69% support paid vacation.
- Over half of employer survey respondents (58%) believe agency and individual hiring entities should be responsible for benefits

## 4) Right to Portable Paid Leave for Domestic Workers

*What does a successful portable benefits system look like?*

- Portability
- Centralized accounting system
- Third-party administration
- Enforceability
- Universal coverage
- Continued engagement with workers/worker organizations
- Outreach and education





The Committee must respond to these recommendations by September 15, 2021.

## Next Steps

- Standing monthly check-in to touch base on Council's progress during the DWSB's regular meetings.
- Separate monthly meeting with the Coalition and representatives or staff of the Committee to discuss the right to paid leave, starting within the first 30 days after this presentation.