



AFL-CIO

Partnership Agreement

Between the American Federation of Labor Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) and the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA)

May 10, 2011

It is with great excitement that we set forth here a formal partnership between the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) and the American Federation of Labor Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) to raise the level of respect and recognition for domestic workers, establish labor standards, and to help build a more inclusive and powerful labor movement in the United States.

Background

Through explicit and implicit exclusion of domestic workers from most labor and employment laws, domestic workers' contributions to our nation's and individual families' household economies have gone hidden, devalued, and little understood. This history of exclusion can be traced to the specifics of the industry and race politics.

Primarily working in isolation in private homes, domestic workers who were predominantly African American women were subjected to discrimination, unsafe working conditions, stolen wages, intimidation, and a long list of other abuses.

Although the demographics of domestic workers have changed to a mostly immigrant women workforce, the working conditions in the industry have changed very little.

Through this partnership, the NDWA and the AFL-CIO commit to promote the ability of each organization to advance the workplace rights of domestic workers and create new protections where none exist.

The **National Domestic Workers Alliance** (NDWA) brings together 33 organizations in 17 major cities and 11 states across the country to organize the 2.5 million domestic workers in the United States for respect, recognition and labor standards. Through leadership development, strategic campaigns and alliance building we seek to help build a powerful movement for social and global justice.

The **American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations** (AFL-CIO) is a voluntary federation of 55 national and international labor unions. The AFL-CIO represents 12.2 million members, including 3.2 million members in Working America, its community affiliate. The AFL-CIO includes teachers and taxi drivers, musicians and miners, firefighters and farm workers, bakers and bottlers, engineers and editors, pilots and public employees, doctors and nurses, painters and plumbers—and more. The mission of the AFL-CIO is to improve the lives of working families—to bring economic justice to the workplace and social justice to our nation. To accomplish this mission we will *build* and *broaden* the American labor movement.

Goals and Objectives

This agreement is dedicated to strengthening collaboration on local, statewide, national and international campaigns for recognition and labor standards for domestic workers, including but not limited to:

- Local City and county level campaigns to enact ordinances or laws to expand protections and promote the rights of domestic workers;
- Statewide campaigns to establish labor standards for domestic workers;
- Campaigns to create administrative and regulatory changes at state and federal Departments of Labor;
- National campaigns to establish labor standards, expand collective bargaining rights, create dignified jobs and support quality care for all, such as the Caring Across Generations campaign;
- International collaboration to bring visibility and dignity to the global domestic workforce, including the Decent Work for Domestic Workers Convention at the International Labor Organization.

This collaboration will include strategic dialogues and activities toward strengthening labor laws and the labor movement more broadly;

- 21st Century Collective Bargaining - assist domestic worker organizations and unions interested in exploring and piloting new models for collective bargaining.
- The Excluded Workers Congress - engage in a series of dialogues with members of the Excluded Workers Congress to analyze the existing legal framework for workers' rights, including the right to organize, with an eye toward developing more inclusive labor laws.

Both parties commit to building lasting and meaningful relationships between affiliates of NDWA and the AFL-CIO at the local and regional level by:

- Identifying opportunities to educate AFL-CIO and NDWA affiliates about each other to build power and win respect on the job.
- Supporting involvement of domestic workers organizations in Central Labor Councils and State Federations.
- Encouraging Central Labor Councils and State Federations to support campaigns for labor standards and domestic worker justice.
- Encouraging NDWA affiliates to engage in broader labor workplace rights campaigns that strengthen and promote organizing
- Developing and deepening relationships between NDWA affiliates and AFL-CIO member unions.

- Developing new educational curriculum and programming that can foster mutual understanding and authentic relationships of solidarity between domestic workers and union members at the rank-and-file level.

Mechanism for Promoting the Agreement

Critical to the success of this partnership is the building of relationships between local NDWA affiliates and state and local labor movements. Until these communities know each other, work with each other, and have an institutional connection to each other, it will be much more difficult to plan and strategize together, and to build a level of trust necessary to work effectively together in pursuit of our common goals and objectives.

Consequently, NDWA affiliates and AFL-CIO state and local labor federations will join together, where appropriate, as follows:

- Pursuant to the process set forth in the AFL-CIO Executive Council resolution, “A National Worker Center – AFL-CIO Partnership” (Aug. 9, 2006), NDWA affiliates may affiliate with an AFL-CIO state federation and/or a central labor council in its community where both parties have determined that a partnership will be mutually beneficial and that the organizations have shared goals and where the President of the AFL-CIO has issued a Certificate of Affiliation to the NDWA affiliate.
- The purpose of an affiliation of a NDWA affiliate to an AFL-CIO state federation and/or central labor council is to work cooperatively on issues of mutual concern. Affiliation will entitle the NDWA affiliate to a representative in the state federation and/or central labor council. Workers served by NDWA affiliates that affiliate with an AFL-CIO state federation and/or central labor council are eligible for membership in Working America, the AFL-CIO’s community affiliate.
- Such affiliations will be strictly voluntary; no AFL-CIO state federation or central labor council and no NDWA affiliate that does not wish to enter into such an affiliation arrangement will be required to do so.
- NDWA affiliates that choose to affiliate with an AFL-CIO state federation and/or central labor council will maintain their full autonomy and will not be bound by the Constitution of the AFL-CIO or those of its subordinate bodies.

Ground Rules

The parties agree that in establishing and implementing this partnership agreement, it is important to observe the following ground rules:

- The partnership must strengthen, and not undermine, both NDWA’s and the AFL-CIO’s existing organizations and networks. The AFL-CIO will support and stand in solidarity with domestic workers organizing to improve their working conditions through non-bargaining unit organizing with NDWA and its affiliates. NDWA and its affiliates will support and stand in solidarity with domestic workers who are members of the AFL-CIO and its affiliates as they organize to improve their working conditions through collective bargaining.

- The partnership must recognize each organization's autonomy and jurisdiction. NDWA and its affiliates will not compete with the AFL-CIO or any of its member unions that organize in the domestic work industry or undermine or interfere with the AFL-CIO's legislative or policy efforts. The AFL-CIO will not undermine or interfere with any existing or future fundraising, legislative or policy efforts by NDWA or its affiliates and whenever possible will support such fundraising, legislative and policy efforts.
- The ongoing negotiations and implementation of this partnership agreement must respect each organization's internal decision-making processes.
- The AFL-CIO will not enter into individual agreements with NDWA affiliates without consultation and agreement with NDWA.

We believe this partnership will enable domestic workers to take their rightful place in the labor movement. And we believe this partnership will contribute to the creation of a broader US labor movement that reflects the hopes and dreams of the entire working-class, a new labor movement that we urgently need, and that we must build together.

Together in Solidarity,

National Domestic Workers Alliance

American Federation of Labor Congress of Industrial Organizations