



**Domestic Workers Ordinance (DWO)
Train the Trainer Toolkit: Ordinance Real-Life Scenarios**

These real-life scenarios are designed to prompt meaningful conversations, deepen understanding, and explore the law from multiple perspectives, including workers, employers, and community advocates. This activity helps participants connect the ordinance to everyday situations and reflect on how rights and responsibilities show up in real life.

Each scenario includes:

- A short story based on real-world experiences
- Discussion prompts to guide group conversations
- Key takeaways aligned with the law

Facilitator Instructions: How to Lead This Activity

1. **Set the Tone:** Let participants know there are no “wrong” answers. This is about learning and reflection, not judgment.
 - Emphasize that this training space is confidential, supportive, and respectful.
 - Encourage folks to share from their experience, ask questions, and listen to each other.
2. **Choose a Scenario:** Read each one aloud as a group or have participants read it in pairs or small groups. If you’re short on time, pick 1–2 scenarios most relevant to your audience.
3. **Prompt Discussion:** Use the guiding questions under each scenario to start the conversation. Encourage participants to reflect from the worker/hiring entity perspective.
4. **Share Key Takeaways:** Highlight anything that surprised the group or sparked strong reactions.
5. **Make it Personal:** Encourage participants to think about how this applies to them or people in their community. Ask: “What would you do differently now that you know this?” or “Who do you think needs to hear this information?”
6. **Wrap Up with Resources:** Let participants know where they can get help or ask questions:
 - Office of Labor Standards (OLS)
 - Local community organizations (Worker centers, immigrant rights groups, or legal aid).
 - Share any handouts, hotline numbers, or websites that are relevant.
7. **Tips for Success**
 - Use open-ended questions to keep the conversation flowing.
 - Adapt the language if needed.
 - Rephrase questions in simpler terms for your group.
 - If someone shares a difficult story, thank them for their courage and bring the group back to the law and resources.
 - If things get off track or off topic, gently redirect with a phrase like:
“That’s a good point. Let’s bring it back to the scenario and what the law says.”



Scenario 1 - The Live-In Nanny: Sara lives with the family she works for in North Seattle. She cares for two kids, cooks, and cleans. She works 12 hours a day, five days a week, but only gets paid for 40 hours and never gets a full day off.

- What are Sara's rights under the law?
- What is the family supposed to provide?
- How might things like immigration status or cultural norms affect her ability to speak up?

DWO Key Points

- Sara is fully covered by the Domestic Workers Ordinance
- She must be paid for every hour she works, including overtime if she qualifies
- She gets a 30-minute unpaid meal break for every 5 hours worked
- She gets a 10-minute paid rest break for every 4 hours worked
- As a live-in worker, she must get 1 full day (24 hours) off every 7 days
- The employer must provide a written agreement with hours, pay, breaks, and duties
- Immigration status does not change her rights

Scenario 2 - The Elder Care Aide: Jenn takes care of an 86-year-old woman, helping her bathe, take medication, and stay company. Sometimes, she's asked to stay overnight without extra pay.

- What does the law say about overnight shifts?
- What counts as "work" during sleep time?
- How should Jenn track her hours?

DWO Key Points

- If Jenn is hired directly by the household (not an agency), she's covered
- If she doesn't get 5+ continuous hours of sleep, she must be paid for overnight time
- She still gets rest breaks and a day off every week, just like any live-in worker
- The employer needs a written agreement covering overnight expectations and pay

Scenario 3 - The Housekeeper with a Contract: Jean has a written agreement for pay, schedule, and breaks. But the employer keeps changing her hours last minute without talking to her.

- What does the law say about changes in schedule?
- What should be in the contract? How can both sides communicate better?

DWO Key Points

- Jean is covered and it's great she has a written agreement
- Employers should give as much advance notice as possible for schedule changes
- Seattle's law doesn't require "predictive scheduling," but sudden changes can be unfair
- Update the agreement to spell out how changes should be shared (e.g., 24 hours' notice)



Scenario 4 - Undocumented Workers: Julia cleans homes for multiple families. She's undocumented and scared to speak up when people skip paying her or ask her to do more work than agreed.

- Are undocumented workers protected?
- How can someone like Julia report abuse safely?
- How do we build trust in the community?

Key Points

- Julia is fully protected under the DWO, even if undocumented
- She can report anonymously or through a trusted community group
- Trainers should highlight language access and support from local organizations
- Address fear by offering safe reporting options and clear reassurance
 - Her immigration status doesn't limit her rights

Scenario 5 - The Employer Who Doesn't Know the Law: Aisha hired a babysitter. She pays her cash and doesn't track hours. She doesn't know anything about the DWO.

- How do you help Aisha understand her responsibilities?
- How do you balance education with accountability?
- What tools can you share?

Key Points

- Aisha is considered an employer under the law
- She must pay minimum wage, give breaks, and ideally create a written agreement
- Paying under the table breaks tax rules and makes it hard to prove pay
- Trainers should avoid judgment, use a supportive tone and share helpful tools like sample agreements and the Model Notice of Rights

Scenario 6 - Setting Pay Expectations Upfront: A domestic worker is meeting a new client for the first time. The hiring entity wants to "wait and see" how the first week goes before agreeing on a rate or schedule. Goal: Practice advocating for a written agreement before starting.

Discussion points and sample answers:

- What are the worker's rights under the DWO?
 - Workers have a right to know the terms of employment up front. This includes pay, schedule, and duties. The law encourages written agreements to prevent misunderstandings.
- How can the worker set clear boundaries respectfully?
 - "I'd feel more comfortable if we confirmed the pay and expectations in writing before I start. It helps ensure we're both clear and set up for success."
- What tools can support this conversation? A sample work agreement template, a one-page summary of DWO rights, or referring to a worker advocacy group for support.



Scenario 7 - Requesting Breaks: A nanny hasn't had a break after working over 3 hours and wants to ask for her legally required 10-minute break. Goal: Practice asserting break rights without damaging rapport.

Discussion points and sample answers:

- What language balances professionalism and self-advocacy?
 - "Hey, would it be alright if I take a quick 10-minute break soon? I know the city requires one after three hours, and it helps me stay refreshed for the rest of the day."
- What are common responses, and how can the worker stay grounded?
 - Employer might say, "But the baby is sleeping, you don't need one."
Response: "Even if it's a calm time, that break helps me recharge. I'll stay nearby and alert."
- How can this be revisited if ignored?
 - Request a short meeting or text summary of expectations: "I wanted to check in about break times and make sure we're following the city guidelines moving forward."

Scenario 8 - Handling Unclear Job Duties: A house cleaner is asked to do tasks not in the original agreement. Goal: Learn to clarify duties and negotiate fair pay.

Discussion points and sample answers:

- What does the DWO say about job expectations?
 - While the DWO doesn't mandate written contracts, it strongly encourages clear agreements. Changes in duties should come with consent and potential pay changes.
- How can the worker propose revisiting the agreement?
 - "I noticed we've added some new tasks like pet sitting and outdoor work."
 - Could we revisit our agreement to make sure my rate reflects the extra responsibilities?"
- What power dynamics are at play?
 - The worker might feel pressured to say yes to avoid losing the job. They may need community backup, like a worker rights organization, for support and advocacy.

Scenario 9 - Getting Paid Late (or Not at All): A caregiver's payment is delayed. Goal: Handle delayed pay respectfully and protect legal rights.

Discussion points and sample answers:

- What are the legal obligations under DWO? Workers must be paid on a regular, agreed-upon schedule. Delayed or missed payments can be wage theft and are reportable.
- How can the worker document the situation? Keep text or email records of payment agreements, screenshots of hours worked, and notes about when payment was expected.
- What steps can be taken if payment isn't received?
- If still unpaid: Contact the Seattle Office of Labor Standards (OLS) or a local worker center to report it confidentially.