



Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan signs the Domestic Workers Ordinance, 2018

DOMESTIC WORKERS STANDARDS BOARD

2020-2022 Workplan

The Domestic Workers Standards Board formed to help implement Seattle's Domestic Workers Ordinance. This workplan outlines the Board's goals and priorities.

Dana Barnett – Co-Chair

Silvia Gonzalez – Co-Chair

Elijah Blagg

Emily Dills

Teresa Hillis

Elizabeth Hunter-Keller

Andra Kranzler

Victor Lozada

Lani Todd

Jordan Goldwarg

Baylie Freeman

Etelbina Hauser

Candace Faber

Mission, Vision, Values

Mission

The Domestic Workers Standards Board is committed to improving the working conditions of domestic workers by providing a place for workers, employers, organizations, and the public to make suggestions to strengthen, enforce, implement, and expand on the Domestic Workers Ordinance (DWO).

Vision

In developing our 2020 - 2022 workplan, we aim to work toward the following vision:

- Create a “culture shift” to make domestic work visible, valued, and sustainable
- Ensure workers and hiring entities are informed and supported, while ensuring that hiring entities are also accountable and regulated
- Where possible, ensure that better communication and relationships are cultivated between workers and hiring entities, across languages and cultures

Values

In our work, we commit to the following guiding principles:

- Guarantee that domestic workers’ voices and needs are actively included in our board and directly inform our work.
- Apply an intersectional lens to any suggestions, with the intention of ensuring that communities most marginalized are seriously considered and positively impacted.
- Work collaboratively with organizations and entities in the City of Seattle that are engaged in domestic workers’ rights work, or immigrant justice, labor rights, disability justice, racial equity, and other any intersecting issues.
- Work so that everyone may have access to affordable and accessible healthcare, childcare, homecare and other basic needs.
- Implement and proactively work within an anti-racist framework.

To work towards its mission and vision, the board has organized its work in three distinct areas: Policy, Tools, and Outreach.

Policy

Current situation and challenges

Currently, domestic workers often earn less than similarly employed hourly workers, and their earnings can be seriously impacted by injuries or illness. Many domestic workers lack control of their schedule. Professional development opportunities are rare. Many domestic workers lack the powerful tool of a collective voice, and thus are unable to meaningfully address unfortunate common workplace issues such as racism, sexism, and classism in their workplaces. Economic barriers for both hiring entities and domestic workers, and the public perception that domestic workers are not entitled to rights, complicate enforcement and compliance with the new and existing labor rights of domestic workers.

Desired Result

Create a “culture shift” to make domestic work visible, valued, and sustainable by establishing additional labor standards.

Goal	Strategy, Actions, and Measures
<p>Explore amendments to current DWO for greater clarity and consistency of enforcement.</p>	<p>Research cost/benefit of removal of public funding exception</p> <p>Explore implications of removing the “interference” standard, and creating joint liability for households contracting with a domestic employer</p> <p>Explore mandating a notice of rights or model contract, and how to enforce it</p>
<p>Explore additional protections that encourage workers to enforce their rights and improve their working conditions.</p>	<p>Research ideas to encourage greater enforcement like new collective bargaining models, preventative pay during complaint process, encouraging private right of action, etc.</p> <p>Explore a secured scheduling policy for domestic workers</p> <p>Research policies that build worker power and collective voice.</p> <p>Research potential policies to encourage a prevailing wage for domestic workers, and funding models to support families struggling with affordability</p> <p>Research feasibility of creating a registry of domestic worker referral agencies and caregiving businesses (not household hiring entities)</p> <p>Explore existing childcare subsidies for households, and whether domestic workers could qualify.</p> <p>Explore possibility of OLS funding community organizations to conduct research on the above topics</p>
<p>Identify and support the provision of benefits to workers</p>	<p>Research potential portable benefits models and explore feasibility of mandate.</p> <p>Draft recommendation regarding portable benefits mandate.</p>

Tools and Resources

Current situation and challenges

Domestic workers' workplace is at once a deeply personal space and isolating—for example, household employers may have no day-to-day contact with workers who clean their most intimate spaces. Compounding this sense of isolation are frequent language barriers between employers and employees. Due in part to a lack of shared information and facile communication, tensions can rise between workers and hiring entities.

Desired Result

Where possible, ensure that better communication and relationships are cultivated between workers and hiring entities, across languages and cultures.

Goal	Strategy, Actions, and Measures
<p>Explore simplified and accessible human resource and benefits tools (i.e. retirement, workers compensation, paid sick and safe time, health insurance, etc.)</p>	<p>Research portable benefit tools like Alia and black car fund and identify the gaps that are preventing the Domestic Worker from accessing new or existing employment benefits</p> <p>Recommend best practices based on identified gaps in the types of tools and resources needed to assist domestic workers and hiring entities with receiving employment benefits</p> <p>Create outreach and education materials about how to access resources available, such as “FAQ” or “How To” guides on Workers Compensation for independent contractor workers and hiring entities. This includes all services that are available for low-wage workers and independent contractors (Fresh Bucks, Access to Affordable Housing and Healthcare, Orca Lift, etc.)</p> <p>Advocate for accessible financial tools for domestic workers and hiring entities</p>
<p>Help create specified tools, for domestic workers and hiring entities that explain domestic worker rights and hiring entity responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create a contractual framework that allows hiring entities and domestic workers to affirm the working relationship in writing. 	<p>Help develop/research tools such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a standardized offer letter that includes the notice of rights as well as agreed upon employment terms, ● template for model employment agreements/statements of understanding, ● template for modifications to the original agreement, and ● other resources or guidance to advance equitable contracting and negotiations
<p>Explore existing resources and information currently available for hiring entities and Domestic workers to address issues such as immigrant rights, housing, transportation, childcare, food, healthcare,</p>	<p>Research existing tools available to Hiring Entities, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education tools to advocate and protect Domestic workers from ICE/CBP ● Financial programs or resources available to offset the cost of childcare, elder care and homecare

<p>business development, workplace safety, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tools for facilitating affordable health care for Domestic workers or resources to help reduce the cost of healthcare for hiring entities <p>Work with the City of Seattle to identify and make available educational materials and resources for hiring entities to understand health care options for small businesses and independent contractors</p> <p>Advocate for legal resources to help Domestic workers apply for either U-Visa or T-Visa if they report a violation of the law against their employer</p>
<p>Develop or advocate for new resources for Domestic workers and hiring entities to address pertinent issues (listed above)</p>	<p>Help create, or recommend OLS fund community organizations to create, a resource guide with all services and opportunities that are available for low-wage workers and independent contractors (Fresh Bucks, Access to Affordable Housing and Healthcare, Orca Lift, etc.)</p> <p>Develop best practice and training recommendations for Domestic workers to get specific training related to their industry</p> <p>Increase networking opportunities for domestic workers and hiring entities to fully access economic opportunities and connections with the resources and assistance available (i.e. Ventures)</p>

Outreach

Current situation and challenges

The nature of domestic work presents myriad challenges for successful outreach. Some domestic workers, such as gardeners and landscapers, don't self-identify as domestic workers; they, and many hiring entities, see domestic work as primarily female. Many domestic workers are wary of interacting with civic departments such as the Seattle Office of Labor Standards and worry about the DWO's effects on taxes and benefits. Hiring entities may not see themselves as employers, and domestic workers may fear job security for reporting employer violations. Both domestic workers and hiring entities may have a desire to preserve the benefits of the informal economy, such as flexibility.

Desired Result

Ensure domestic workers and hiring entities are informed and supported, while also ensuring that hiring entities are accountable and regulated. Convey the DWO as a "floor not a ceiling,"—the DWO is the groundwork for successful and mutually beneficial employer-employee relationships, not the end word.

Goal	Strategy, Actions, and Measures
Ensure all relevant audiences receive outreach and education regarding new law, as well as potential new policies and tools.	<p>Identify which audiences have already been contacted and which groups still needs intensive outreach by collaborating with the Office of Labor Standards, DWO partners, and the DWSB</p> <p>Identify domestic worker and hiring entity audiences that need outreach</p> <p>Conduct in-person analyses of relevant community orgs/ audiences by canvassing communities to identify needs and gaps</p> <p>Identify and name different groups of domestic workers so they can receive education and outreach, such as gardeners, nannies, and housekeepers</p> <p>Research and identify hard-to-reach domestic workers and those who don't identify as domestic workers like gardeners and home health care workers</p> <p>Explore possibility of OLS funding community organizations to provide expertise on the above topics</p>
Explore specific and tailored outreach campaigns for audiences of both domestic workers and hiring entities	<p>Implement or advise on a 3-pronged approach to media communications which includes: talking points, social media, and earned media</p> <p>Review current social media efforts (if any), determine where domestic workers and employers are talking online</p> <p>Reach out to a variety of civic places for partnerships and literature placement, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Seattle City Light, to begin exploring utility campaign in partnership with the Office of Labor Standards

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seattle Public Libraries and Community Centers to place DWO literature ● Bus stops ● Parent Teacher Associations <p>Serve as a sounding board for ongoing efforts by OLS and potentially other community partners</p>
<p>Ensure workers and employers understand that this ordinance is not punitive and that the purpose of the ordinance is protection, not punishment</p> <p>Address any fear barriers to implementing the ordinance</p>	<p>Work with community partners to create a website, linked from the OLS website, that lists all materials explaining the ordinance and the process for reporting and/or enforcement</p> <p>Webpage(s) must be language accessible for workers, hiring entities and community-based organizations that support domestic workers</p> <p>Website’s emphasis should be on domestic worker rights, addressing protections regardless of immigration status, recourses for retaliation by hiring entities, and deemphasizing taxation.</p>
<p>Ensure all communication materials are clear, understandable, and accessible to both domestic workers and employers</p>	<p>Create accessible language checklist and translate materials into multiple relevant languages</p> <p>Define essential domestic worker terminology for all external communications</p> <p>Ensure all communications are tailored to specific audiences with language that is relevant and accessible to them</p>

Priorities for 2020

The Domestic Workers Standards Board will devote much of 2020 to research, discovery, and relationship-building in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis to prioritize our recommendations. Already the DWSB has built strong connections with a variety of community partners who regularly attend Board meetings. Their valuable input, along with discussions with city and civic departments, will help inform and guide the Board's work. The Board anticipates preparing initial recommendations to Council by the end of 2020. These initial recommendations may address the following issues, including but not limited to:

- Possible amendments to the current DWO to provide greater clarity and consistency of enforcement;
- Access to portable benefits, to help give domestic workers a better safety net in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis;
- A comprehensive resource for domestic workers and hiring entities on health and safety guidelines, workers' rights, and economic resources available (such as relief grants, unemployment insurance, paid sick and paid safe time, etc.);
- Template language for contracts, offer letters, contract modification language, etc., that allows hiring entities and domestic workers to affirm the working relationship in writing and ensure worker health and safety during COVID-19; and
- Recommendations for reaching workers and hiring entities effectively during the COVID-19 crisis, including through online, phone, or social media communication tools.

The DWSB is committed above all to increasing the dignity and value of domestic work, ensuring these workers share a fair and equitable place in the Seattle employment market.