



Political and Strategic Campaigns

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In the wake of 2018's *Janus* attack we challenged Washington's Unions to join us in the work of organizing and mobilizing more working people than ever before. Union membership is on the rise, union members are running for office up and down the ballot, and union activists are engaging at all levels of democracy. The affiliates of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO are doing the work to build a fighting labor movement that all workers have the freedom to join. Washington's unions have met the challenge and are committed to building power for working people of all colors and backgrounds.



The WSLC is committed to working with affiliates and Central Labor Councils to build worker power through organizing by supporting internal organizing efforts and facilitating a federation-wide culture of organizing to strengthen our movement. It is through our organizing and our commitment to running a grassroots political program - Labor Neighbor – that we win for working people. The WSLC's political education program, considered a national model by the AFL-CIO, offers instruction and assistance for unions interested in voter registration drives, candidate training for union members through our Path to Power Program, establishing and building political action funds, and communicating with members via door knocks, mail, phone, worksite leafleting, and digital advertising.



In the mist of three pandemics – a health crisis, our economy on the verge of recession, and structural racism - our message in the current political climate is clear: we will focus on the importance of creating economic freedom for working people of all colors and backgrounds. Economic and racial justice are intrinsically linked and working people through our collective action are committed to fighting for justice for all working people. By focusing on the issues that matter to working people, and directly linking them to public policy and the need to elect candidates to office who will be champions for workers and legislate pro-worker policy, we win political power.

Political Organizing

Through the work of our 2018 Labor Neighbor Program, union members turned out to vote at 6% higher than the general public. In Legislative Districts where we targeted Union Families those who were canvassed, called on the phone, or received a handwritten postcard returned ballots on average at 6% higher than those who didn't. In some Legislative Districts members who received a contact turned out at rates of over 10% higher than those who didn't receive a personal touch. We know we cannot take the victories of 2018 for granted, with a seven and three seat pro-worker majority in the House and Senate respectively, we must capitalize on those gains and mobilize union members to turnout in support of our endorsed candidates to win for working people in 2020.

This is the most important election of our lives! Washington's Unions are committed to doing the work to elect Vice President Joe Biden and Senator Kamala Harris to the White House - to build back better - and to stand up and support working families. Additionally, through our collective efforts to support our endorsed

Congressional Candidates we can ensure that our representatives in the other Washington are champions for working people. At the top of our State ticket our Governor is up for re-election, and the WSLC is supporting Governor Inslee and our other endorsed candidates to ensure economic recovery is not built on the backs of working people but that working people have a voice in our recovery and the direction of our State.

Giving the opportunity to expand our digital organizing in 2020, this year's Labor Neighbor program will heavily target members digitally as Election Day 2020 approaches. Building off of the success of our 2020 primary work - where 80% of targeted members turned out to vote - through our digital targeting we hope to increase those numbers in the General Election in support of all of our endorsed candidates across Washington State.

Much of the success of our Labor Neighbor program can be attributed to the excitement of the candidates running for office. In this year's election we have multiple Path to Power Candidates and Union Members running for office. Our Path to Power Program - a partnership with the National AFL-CIO candidate training program to train union members and allies to run for office - is a value add to our movement. Our Path to Power program is creating a farmhouse of candidates prepared and ready to run for both local and state office.

Our 2019 Path to Power class was our most diverse yet. Here are the stats: 60% women, 50% under 40, 45% people of color, 25% identifying as either independent or republican. The diversity and success of our Path to Power class is a testament to the commitment of the WSLC's affiliates. In addition to the training program, we've now added an election debrief to the program. During "The Elections Over, Now What?" we spent a day with our P2P candidates going over their campaigns, the results, and working with them on policy and legislative opportunities to win gains for working people in their new roles. Building on the success of the program, earlier this year we launched an Path to Power Intensive training for Union Members and Allies running for the State Legislature in 2020. Of the 5 candidates 3 of them made it through their primary race, and we look forward to celebrating victories with them on November 3rd.

Building on the work we did in 2018 in the 8th Congressional race to secure a victory on behalf of Dr. Kim Schrier, we will use our Labor Neighbor program in 2020 to engage conservative union members to support pro-worker labor- endorsed candidates throughout the state. Many conservative members are in large pockets of rural areas across the state. Using our digital, phone, local union mail, and worksite pillars of our Labor Neighbor program we will be positioned to reach them with our message and increase support for pro-worker candidates.

This year presents an opportunity to strategically think about the work of our statewide worksite program. Conversations at the worksite are our best and strongest opportunity to engage members around working family issues, and thinking creatively through the barriers of social distancing, the conversations will happen. When union members have conversations at work with trusted messengers they vote for the union endorsed candidate at 8% higher rates than those who do not have worksite conversations. Expanding and strengthening the worksite pillar of our 2020 Labor Neighbor program will be key to making gains for working families in Washington state.

Winning gains for working families must include labor, faith, and community working hand-in-hand on statewide issues with a shared interest in launching collaborative campaigns to fight for economic justice and fight for low-wage workers. We hope to continue to build on these partnerships and shared commitment to win critical campaigns and grow political power for unions and community - particularly in immigrant communities and communities of color.

Statewide Organizing

Since our last convention, the Washington Works Together table - formed by public sector unions to strengthen solidarity and collaboration between their unions in the wake of the constant attacks against public sector workers - has grown throughout the State. These tables shared best practices on deepening internal organizing, fighting back against attacks by the Freedom Foundation and inoculating members against anti-union propaganda. Additionally, tables also focused on collaborative training and skill building for rank and file members to strengthen their organizing skills to build additional power in the workplace. In true solidarity the table now includes both public and private sector unions - because all unions must have members who are trained with the skills to push back against workplace attacks against our union and worker rights. Through local

organizing and mass mobilization of activists the tables also fought back and defeated multiple anti-worker Open Public Bargaining resolutions across the state proposed by local municipalities.

Local Washington Works Together tables have been formed in Spokane, Tri-Cities, Yakima, Pierce County, Thurston County, and Clark County. These local tables are building and training a base of local union activists. In 2019 Thurston Co. Clark Co. and Tri-Cities WWT tables hosted 3 Working Peoples Summits. These summits brought together 300 rank and file union members, strengthening cross union solidarity, energizing members to further step up in their unions and deepen workplace organizing skills.

Working with the Central Labor Councils across the State, a Central Labor Council Network was organized to create an ongoing structure for statewide collaboration. After two full day retreats were held a steering committee was formed to create an ongoing structure for communication and collaboration around issues impacting working families. Strengthening the capacity of the regional CLC's, strengthens our statewide labor movement, through the local activists who are engaged and ready to mobilize on behalf of all workers.

Through the WSLC's commitment to be a voice for all working people, we have focused in on fighting side by side with local unions and community partners to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of essential but excluded immigrant workers. This includes: supporting farmworker organizing drives in Yakima; teaming up with the WA Immigrant Solidarity Network to create a hotline for immigrant workers to call if they are unsafe at work, connect them to information and unions in their industries; assisting with L&I safety claims; creating accessible educational materials and trainings on COVID workplace safety and organizing rights; advocating for stronger safety standards at work; and the creation of a \$40 million, Immigrant Worker Relief Fund for workers who are excluded from federal assistance and unemployment benefits.

COVID-19 has changed the landscape of workers' lives and organizing potential in every sector and every region of our state. Posing both immense challenges and hardships alongside striking opportunity for the labor movement to step up for all workers in this moment. In the face of these uncertain times unions have organized and are fighting like hell for the safety and security of both union and unorganized workers, building worker power. Washington's labor movement is responding aggressively to the organizing call to bring many more workers into unions and the labor movement and collectively we grew our union membership in 2019 by 65,000 workers!

Union, Community and Naturalization Organizing in Yakima

The WSLC is actively building power for the labor movement in central Washington through organizing and providing citizenship services in Yakima County. The WSLC through its local affiliates and in partnership with community organizations servicing immigrant communities, are helping to organize and build power for working families in the region.

Early in the year, the WSLC was granted the rare designation by the United States Department of Justice to provide pro bono naturalization services in the region. WSLC immigration legal aid services are operating in partnership with Nuestra Casa in lower Yakima County. Union families and community members enrolled in citizenship class pay nominal fees for services and are offered a service fee waiver if they are unable to pay the fees. Through this partnership the WSLC has been able to expand the program and provide legal services to help immigrant workers become naturalized citizens of the United States. Obtaining citizenship provides economic and familial stability for workers, and it empowers workers to report workplace safety or sanitary violations.

Organizing for worksite protections has been vital in the face of enormous challenges brought by COVID-19 and its impact on vulnerable communities. In addition to supporting affiliated union members the WSLC remains committed to supporting non-unionized workers who work in unsafe conditions and want to assert their labor rights with their employer. The impacts of COVID-19 were rampant in immigrant communities across Yakima County, with disproportionately high rates showing among workers in agriculture. In a highly non-unionized sector, the WSLC fortified its support for affiliates Familias Unidas por la Justicia and the United Farm Workers with additional resources and advocacy support for agricultural workers. The WSLC was extremely active in supporting the workers that walked out on strike at fruit packing warehouses in May and June due to unsafe working conditions. In addition, the WSLC has partnered numerous local advocacy organizations to distribute PPE during the pandemic helping the WSLC and local partners gain a deeper understanding of immigrant

experiences in the workforce.

The WSLC will remain invested in accelerating momentum in the local labor movement in Yakima County while continuing to provide direct services for immigrant workers. This is fundamental to the safety, stability and future prosperity of workers and their families in this region. The WSLC is proud to work in union and in solidarity with all those advocating for labor rights, immigrant rights, and servicing vulnerable members of union families in Yakima County.

While at our last in-person convention we were joined by 16 of the WSLC's Union Summer Interns as guests from across the state, this year our program has been postponed. The WSLC is committed to training, teaching, and learning from the next generation of Union organizers and leaders and will continue to grow the program beyond the Summer in support of our affiliates political, legislative, and organizing campaigns. And while we will miss the interns this year, some of them will be around as 7 of the 16 Interns went on to accept full-time jobs with our affiliates.

In conclusion the WSLC's Political and Strategic Campaigns department working with affiliates and CLCs will use innovative and creative ways to organize new workers; strengthen collective bargaining agreements to benefit workers, community, and the environment; and broaden our ties in the community with community partners and allied organizations, strengthening the collective power of Washington's working families.

In addition, through our electoral work, we will work to win elections. But, winning elections will not be enough. Our political program is rooted in building, growing, and fostering relationships with Elected Leaders. It is through those relationships we win for working people. By directly advocating for good pro-worker policy and holding elected officials accountable, we advance our pro-worker agenda. By direct lobbying and advocacy we can create an economy that works for all people; one that relies on political participation that protects democracy, raises wages, values women and families, enhances economic security for working people, invests in things that matter to our communities, and creates new rules for the national economy.

Together, by organizing and mobilizing union members through collective actions we harness our political power and rewrite the rules.