



WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS CLINIC

Spring 2023 Newsletter

WERC Awarded \$220,000 Grant by the James Irvine Foundation

This May, WERC was awarded a \$220,000, 2-year grant by the James Irvine Foundation to continue our work recovering stolen wages for low-wage workers, raising labor standards, and shifting industry practices in the residential care industry. The grant is part of our work with the California Strategic Enforcement Partnership (CSEP), a collaboration between 17 worker rights organizations or community-based organizations (CBOs), the state Labor Commissioner's Office, and the National Employment Law Project (NELP). WERC is thrilled to continue its work on behalf of low-wage workers through the James Irvine Foundation's continued support.



Above: Hear about the clinic's work from the students themselves! In this video, Spring 2023 clinical students *Kodie McGinley* and *Inna Nytochka* describe their experience in WERC.

Another Successful Semester: WERC Spring 2023 Students Represent Low-Wage Workers

Ten Golden Gate law students participated in WERC during the Spring 2023 semester. Clinic students worked in pairs, representing clients in mediations before the California Civil Rights Department, informal settlement negotiations and filing complaints before administrative agencies. Students developed substantive and skills-based knowledge to become better lawyers and advocates. They researched procedural and substantive Federal and California wage and hour, discrimination, harassment and retaliation law, developed a fact investigation plan, interviewed clients and witnesses, developed a case theory and drafted mediation briefs and demand letters. Through their hard work, they were able to recover damages for five low-wage workers.



Above: Left, members of the *California Domestic Workers Coalition* rallying for the passage of SB686 in Sacramento; Center, Professors *Ramirez Lee* and *Raven*; Right, Professor *Ramirez Lee* with *California Domestic Workers Coalition* members inside the Capitol Annex Swing Space.

WERC and the California Domestic Workers Coalition Urge Governor Newsom and Lawmakers to Protect Domestic Worker Health and Safety and Pass SB 686

WERC joined other members of the California Domestic Workers Coalition in Sacramento on May 17, 2023 to urge Governor Newsom and California lawmakers to protect domestic worker health and safety and pass Senate Bill 686, sponsored by Senator Maria Elena Durazo. Participants spent the day building unity, sharing art and culture, connecting, and increasing the pressure!

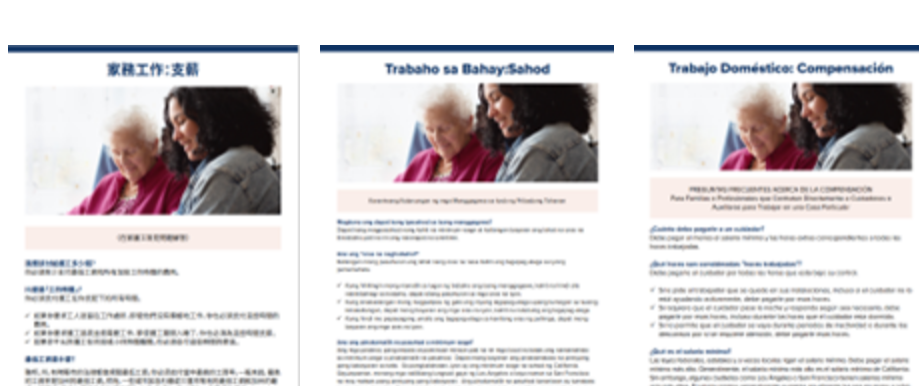
In the United States, domestic workers, largely women and people of color, have been historically excluded from the most basic labor protections, including the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA). Because of this, the California Domestic Workers Coalition, of which WERC is a member, rallied for the passage of SB 686 which will establish health and safety protections for domestic workers under California's Occupational Safety and Health Act (Cal/OSHA). Additionally, the bill will establish a financial and technical assistance program for domestic service employers and provide for health and safety outreach and education for domestic service employees and employers.



Above: Professor *Raven* with members of the *CLEA Conference for New Clinicians Planning Committee*.

WERC Hosted National CLEA Conference for New Clinicians at Golden Gate University

On the tails of a busy semester, WERC hosted the CLEA Conference for New Clinicians at Golden Gate University. The conference, which was attended by over 150 new clinicians, was a great success.

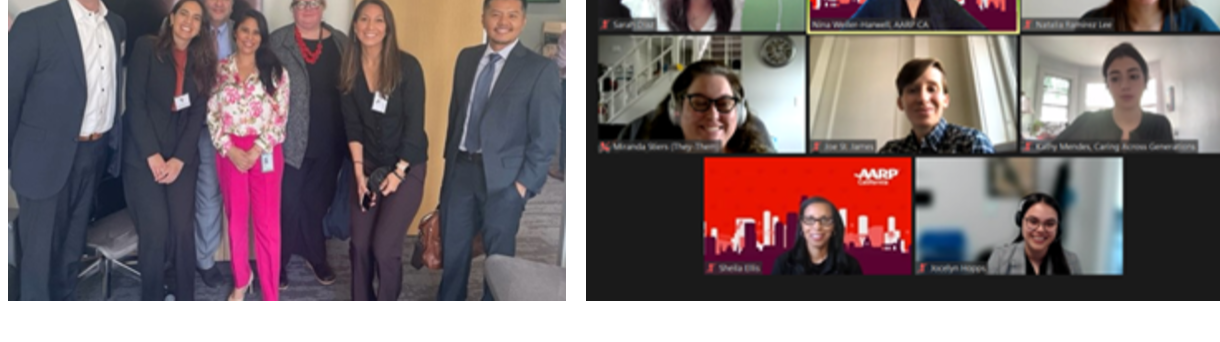


The 360° Caregiving Rights Toolkit is Now Available in Multiple Languages; Trainings Coming in the Fall

Through support from the Metta Fund, WERC developed the 360° Caregiving Rights Toolkit. The toolkit is designed to educate families and professionals who hire caregivers to work in private homes. The videos and handouts help families and professionals navigate the complex maze of state and federal laws to set conditions of employment, including hours, pay and benefits. The toolkit is now available on WERC's website in Tagalog, Mandarin and Spanish.

In addition, with support from the Metta Fund, WERC is collaborating with the Nuddelman Law Firm, P.C., Legal Assistance for Seniors, Hand in Hand, Domestic Employers, the Family Caregiver Alliance and California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform to offer a series of online trainings in the Fall of 2023 on best practices regarding the hiring and compensation of caregivers. Stay tuned for more information soon.

[View the 360 Caregiving Toolkit Here!](#)



Above: Left, Professor *Ramirez Lee* with Assemblymember *Liz Ortega* and California Employment Lawyers Association (CELA) members *Christian Schreiber*, *Enrique Martinez*, *Jennifer Kramer*, CELA Legislative Director *Mariko Yoshihara* and CELA member *Vince Tong* at CELA's Lobby Day; Right, Professor *Ramirez Lee* with members of the *California Work & Family Coalition* during a virtual lobby day.

WERC Lobbies to Protect Caregivers from Discrimination at Work

WERC is committed to representing workers who are caregivers in their workplace and in their homes and supports the passage of Assembly Bill 524 or the Protect Family Caregivers Act, sponsored by Assemblymember Buffy Wicks. AB 524 prohibits discrimination against employees based on their status as a family caregiver. Though any caregiver can experience caregiving discrimination, working mothers and pregnant people are most likely to experience this type of discrimination, with low-wage earners and people of color disproportionately impacted.

To support the passage of AB 524, WERC participated in the California Employment Lawyers' Association's (CELA) Lobby Day in Sacramento on March 15, 2023. WERC also participated in the California Work & Family Coalition's Virtual Lobby Day on May 4, 2023. During these events, Professor Ramirez Lee spoke with staffers for lawmakers about the importance of the bill and the inadequacy of attempting to pursue caregiving discrimination claims through California's existing anti-discrimination law.

WERC Attends Statewide California Strategic Enforcement Partnership Conference

For the third year, WERC participated in the California Strategic Enforcement Partnership. Throughout the year, WERC meets with members of the Labor Commissioner's Office and other community organizations to collaborate on raising industry practices in the residential care sector. This winter, WERC – bringing its institutional knowledge in the residential care industry – attended two very impactful, multi-day conferences in Los Angeles, brainstorming with others on how to enact strategic change in the industry.



Above: Clinic students *Pauline Agpaoa*, *Gulnoza Tursunova*, *Erik Camacho*, *Amos Yeong*, *Shay Thrasher*, *Maxwell Granger*, *Alejandro Bottenberg*, *Inna Nytochka* and Professor *Ramirez Lee* during an end-of-the-semester celebration.

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