

MASSCOSH AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Leading the way
forward while
having your back

A MASSCOSH
CORONAVIRUS
IMPACT REPORT





RESPONDING TO AN UNPRECEDENTED WORKER HEALTH AND SAFETY CRISIS

SINCE MARCH 2020, THOUSANDS OF WORKERS IN MASSACHUSETTS HAVE BECOME ILL OR DIED AS A RESULT OF THEIR EXPOSURE TO COVID-19 IN THE WORKPLACE.

Work is a major way we are becoming ill and spreading the virus. Yet we have failed to fully protect workers, often with tragic results. In the face of this once in a lifetime crisis, MassCOSH has mobilized to provide training, expertise, and technical assistance to those at-risk. We have helped thousands of workers understand their rights and win the lifesaving protections they deserve.



Workers are not expendable commodities to be used to reopen our economy. They must be protected from exposure to the virus. Their lives literally depend on it, and so do ours.

With occ. health and safety in the national spotlight, MassCOSH is taking full advantage of this to highlight the important role unions are playing: protecting workers when so many have failed them and to push forward workers' rights after all this is over.

WHY MASSCOSH'S NONPROFIT STATUS MAKES US SPECIAL AND USEFUL

Since 1976, MassCOSH has been a 501(c)(3) organization, a nonprofit beholden only to working people.

Our diverse funding base and organizational flexibility make MassCOSH a powerful force at the Statehouse, on the streets, and in people's lives to address worker issues as they arise and to fight for a better future.

For almost a half century, MassCOSH has used occupational health and safety as an effective tool to further worker justice. The powerful message that one should be made ill or sacrifice their life for a paycheck has resulted in countless victories for workers like you.

Virtually all of us earn wages to make a living. By supporting the organized, teen workers, and the undocumented, we have proof that when we join together, we can advance the labor movement, regardless of how hard our opponents try to stop us.



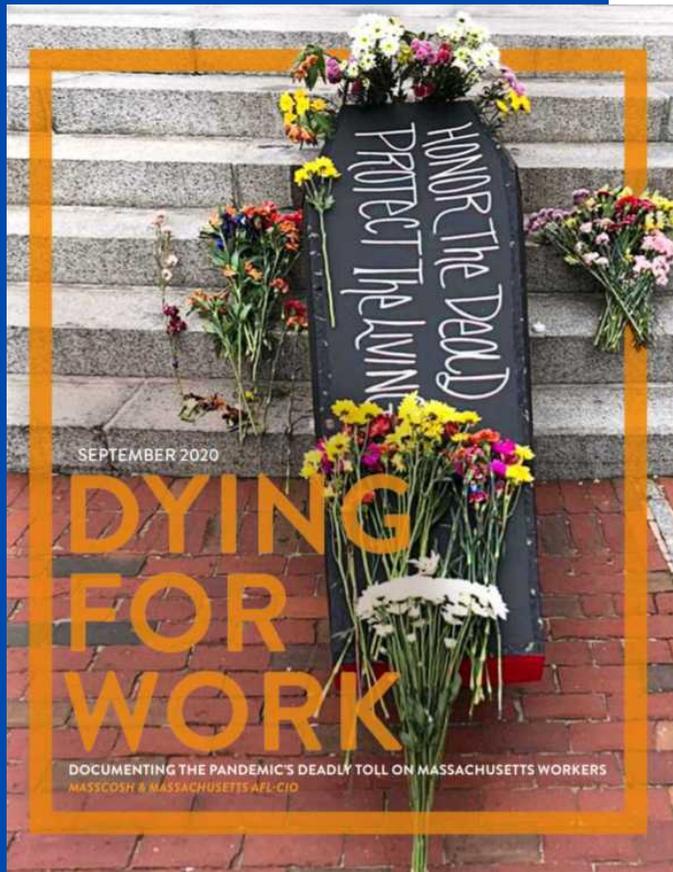
A DECADE AGO, MASSCOSH MADE THE STRATEGIC DECISION TO INVEST RESOURCES IN BUILDING THE ORGANIZING CAPACITY OF THE LOW-WAGE IMMIGRANT WORKERS AND YOUNG WORKERS WHO FACE THE GREATEST RISKS OF WORKPLACE INJURY, ABUSE AND INJUSTICE.

MassCOSH has dedicated over 100,000 hours to building the power of low-wage immigrant and young workers while introducing them into the labor movement. Like you, we believe that building a diverse movement will be critical if we want to beat back the 1% who are attacking our ability to unionize and advocate for justice.

Our Teens Lead @ Work program not only provides important leadership training to young people, but also exposes them to the value of organized labor and union careers through unique partnerships like the annual Pathway to Good Jobs conference.

Our Immigrant Worker Center provides critical support to workers in industries that could greatly benefit from organization, often bringing the power of the labor movement to their struggles while also adding the voices of immigrant workers to express solidarity with union interests.





On September 10, MassCOSH released its groundbreaking report documenting the loss of life taking place at worksites across Massachusetts due to the pandemic. Titled *Dying for Work: Documenting the Pandemic's Deadly Toll on Massachusetts Workers*, the report details how many working-age Mass. residents have died of COVID-19 and lists workers who died of COVID-19 after a potential workplace exposure. It also includes occupational health experts' estimates of how many workers have tested positive for the disease and the record numbers of safety complaints made by workers to government agencies. [Click here to view the report.](#)

Already generating a massive amount of media attention, MassCOSH is reminding the public and policy leaders that workers are dying avoidable deaths and more must be done to protect them.

This badly needed report is made possible thanks to union support.

TOP 10 JOBS WITH MOST COVID-19 CASES IN MA (MARCH 10 - JULY 31)

Rank	COVID-19 cases*	% of COVID-19 cases with known occupation†	Occupation
01	6,537	46%	MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS (including public health workers)
02	1,936	13%	RETAIL FOOD WORKERS (restaurant & grocery stores)
03	1,092	7%	ADMINISTRATIVE & OFFICE SUPPORT
04	1,081	7%	CONSTRUCTION
05	611	4%	SALES
06	399	4%	EDUCATION & CHILD CARE
07	312	4%	FIRST RESPONDERS (police, fire, EMS)
08	299	3%	TRANSPORTATION & MATERIAL MOVING OCCUPATIONS
09	472	3%	BUSINESS & FINANCIAL OPERATIONS
10	327	2%	HUMAN SERVICES (includes social workers)



In the hospital, a nurse holds Lee's hand.

"It's ridiculous what Walmart did to her, how little they did to acknowledge it."

- Elaine Eklund
Daughter of Walmart worker Yok Yen Lee

WORKER ORGANIZING GETS THE GOODS

Workers have been left to fend for themselves, and so they have. Throughout the pandemic, workers fought to ensure that to earn a livelihood is not a death sentence.



ONLY WHEN IT'S SAFE FIGHTING FOR THE HEALTH OF STUDENTS & EDUCATION

When the Department of Education (DESE) and many state staff did their homework about airborne transmission of coronavirus, they held and a committee meetings, trainings, scientific research, and studied ventilation reports. But they did problem - they took action, too. The hearings, bargaining tables, and that in-person school resume #On

FISHING FOR JUSTICE & COVID-19 WORKER PROTECTIONS AT FISH PROCESSING PLANTS

New Bedford is the most valuable fishing port in the US, but for years its largely immigrant workforce has struggled with dangerous working conditions and unfair pay. Typical conditions in fish processing plants—crowded shoulder to shoulder, messy, and wet—are potential hotbeds for spread of the virus. What protective measures company owners had taken were inadequate, and several workers had already fallen ill. Worker activists with the Pescando Justicia (Spanish for "Fishing for Justice") campaign needed their concerns to be heard. So on April 13, workers delivered letters to over 30 companies, advocating for

