

# THE MASSACHUSETTS COALITION FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH

2019 ANNUAL REPORT  
AN EXAMINATION INTO THE MOVEMENT

## TEENS LEAD @ WORK

The Teens Lead @ Work (TL@W) program provides youth-led training for teen workers to ensure their health and safety on the job and engages young workers in efforts to organize for and win concrete improvements in working conditions.



- Hired 28 teen peer leaders who completed our 9-part train-the-trainer curriculum, learning about workplace hazards and gaining leadership skills.
- Peer leaders trained 557 youth on workplace violence/de-escalation, sexual harassment in the workplace, safety and health, and environmental hazards in schools.
- 9 peer leaders graduated this summer. 7 of them are attending college and 2 of them are entering the Trades/Union careers.
- Conducted environmental audits in over a quarter of Boston's traditional public high schools.

As temperatures rise due to climate change, teachers and students in old school buildings are feeling the impact. Studies show that for each degree warmer a classroom gets, student's exam scores drop a percentage point. Heat stress not only makes learning difficult for students, but also creates an unsafe and unhealthy workplace for teachers and staff.

When TL@W noticed how extremely hot school environments exacerbated

their asthma and disrupted their learning, they decided to take action. In 2019, the teens developed a workshop on heat stress including the signs and symptoms of heat illness and recommendations on how to reduce their impact.

TL@W has partnered with the Boston Teachers Union to collect temperature and heat index data in schools.

TL@W also testified in support of a bill that would study heat stress in

schools and lead to the creation of potential regulations and solutions. The teens' long-term goal is to include air conditioning as part of the City of Boston's plan to modernize school buildings, but are also working to identify short-term solutions and policies that build climate resiliency and help prepare school districts for the undeniable future of hotter temperatures.

## WHO ARE WE?



**DEAR FRIENDS,**

2019 has been a challenging year for workers, especially for vulnerable workers like youth and immigrants. However, thanks to your support and solidarity, MassCOSH has risen to meet these challenges. Together, we are providing critical services while also building the capacity of those most affected by workplace injury, abuse, and injustice to lead collective efforts that improve their lives.

As you read through the pages of this report, I hope you are proud of the work we have accomplished. We have trained over 1,000 workers on workplace hazards and on their rights on the job. We have worked to ensure that the new “public sector” OSHA law that went into effect in February of 2019 is a powerful tool for municipal and state workers to organize for safer jobs. We have led local and national efforts to develop worker-focused strategies to address the role of workplace pain in opioid overdose – a leading cause of workplace fatalities in Massachusetts. We have recovered over \$209,000 in wages stolen from mostly immigrant workers. Our teens are leading the way to ensure that the City of Boston’s climate resiliency plans address rising temperatures in their schools where thousands of staff also work.

None of this would have been possible without your support. On behalf of our entire staff and Board of Directors, thank you for being a partner in the struggle for worker and social justice.

In Solidarity,  
**JODI SUGERMAN-BROZAN**  
*MassCOSH Executive Director*

Interested in learning more about MassCOSH efforts and services? Please visit [masscosh.org](http://masscosh.org) for comprehensive information on everything contained in this report and all of our additional programs, campaigns, and resources.

### MASSCOSH STAFF

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*Membership & Communications Director*

**JODI SUGERMAN-BROZAN**  
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Coordinator & Organizer*

**MAXINE FOSTER**  
*Senior Aide*

**ERIKA SANCHEZ**  
*Worker Center Organizer*

### TEENS LEAD @ WORK PEER LEADERS

**CHASE ARTHUR**  
**SOPHIA BEREUS**  
**DEVRAE BURNS**  
**SAMIRA COBAN**  
**RAYVAUGHN CREIGHTON-HOLLO-**  
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**AN TRAN**  
**KAHNARI WHITE**  
**ZAY WILLIAMS**  
**CLIVOHN WILSON**

**MASSCOSH STAFF ARE PROUD MEMBERS OF USW LOCAL 9358.**

## IMMIGRANT WORKER CENTER

The Immigrant Worker Center builds the power of immigrants and workers of color to mobilize for safe and healthy work conditions. The center supports special committees for injured workers and immigrant women and is a member of the Immigrant Worker Center Collaborative.



- Referred 197 low-income, immigrant workers of color to legal services; 80 workers' cases were resolved.
- 320 low-income immigrants attended educational training and clinics about legal rights and workplace hazards.
- Recovered \$209,000 in wages stolen from mostly immigrant workers with the support of our legal partner, Justice at Work, and played a key role in the Wage Theft Coalition.

In partnership with Indiana University of Pennsylvania and the University of Massachusetts Lowell, MassCOSH released the results of a pilot study that engaged 10 Latina members of our MassCOSH Worker Center International Women's Committee in conducting interviews with 42 Latina peers to document immigrant women's experiences related to sexual harassment and violence in the workplace.

We found many disturbing trends: 66% of participants reported that comments about physical appearance or dressing were very frequent and

28% participants reported receiving explicit sexual propositions.

Sadly, due to a variety of issues including documentation status and economic factors, only 17% of participants said they reported when they were sexually harassed. Immigrant women and young women are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment and violence on the job due to less social and economic power, but MassCOSH has developed trainings and tools specifically for these workers.

In 2019, our Worker Center helped 29 low-income immigrant women

who had been sexually harassed or abused at work to learn about their rights, gain referrals to attorneys, and pursue legal action. In addition to legal support, these women also received peer support through the International Women's Committee which many found invaluable in building their confidence to exercise their rights. Similarly, peer leaders in our Teens Lead @ Work program provided sexual harassment training for hundreds of young men and women in 2019, including an intensive three-day train-the-trainer for 10 young women at Fenway High School.

## UNION EDUCATION & ORGANIZING

Our Union Education and Organizing Initiative strengthens the capacity of unions to mobilize and organize for safe and healthy working conditions. In addition to providing training and technical assistance, this initiative also forges coalitions between labor, community and environmental groups, including our Healthy Schools Initiative, to combat health hazards in our workplaces, schools, and communities. It is supported by volunteer committees of occupational health and legal experts.



- Supported by 61 organized labor organizations; attended 24 labor rallies in solidarity.
- Served on the Executive Boards of: Greater Boston Labor Council, Massachusetts AFL-CIO, Massachusetts Jobs with Justice, and the National Council for Occupational Safety & Health.
- Provided training to hundreds of hazardous waste workers and emergency responders through our partnership with The New England Consortium at the University of Massachusetts in Lowell.

In 2018, MassCOSH included opioid and suicide data in its annual report on workplace fatalities for the first time after finding a 1,450% increase in opioid overdose deaths on the job from 2014 to 2017.

A ground-breaking study published by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH) in 2018 found that workers who have higher risk of pain because of workplace injury are also at higher risk of opioid misuse and overdose.

In response, with funding from the MA DPH and in partnership with the

Center for the Promotion of Health in the New England Workplace at UMass Lowell, MassCOSH launched an Opioid Awareness Peer Training Pilot program in 2019 with the goal of educating workers to better understand the risks of opioid painkillers, to be able to advocate for themselves while receiving medical care, and to remove barriers to ending their addiction.

Working with three union partners (Teamsters Local 25, Iron Workers Local 7 and the Massachusetts Nurses Association), MassCOSH

supported six peer trainers to develop curricula tailored to their members. 285 workers were trained in total. Union leaders and project trainers expressed that the pilot exceeded expectations, generating many positive outcomes, including union members entering treatment and new support programs at the worksite and union halls.

Now MassCOSH is sharing results and our program model nationally through National COSH and working to adapt strategies and training curricula for immigrant workers.

## POLICY & ADVOCACY

MassCOSH is recognized as a leader in engaging a diverse constituency in coalescing around priority health and safety problems and taking action that results in measureable change. In the last legislative session, MassCOSH and our allies expanded OSHA protections to over 430,000 public sector workers, expanded protections for pregnant workers, and increased corporate fines for manslaughter. MassCOSH's policy and advocacy priorities are identified based on the research, experience, and recommendations of Massachusetts' most vulnerable workers. These efforts seek to create systematic change in workplaces and the power structures that place profits over people.



MassCOSH's Legal Committee, a group of legal volunteers committed to identifying opportunities to improve the administration of worker justice, focused its efforts in 2019 on the role of employer retaliation and fraud.

Currently, no state agency has any power or ability to investigate retaliation complaints or to enforce the current anti-retaliation law, leaving workers largely unprotected from this type of employer abuse.

A worker may bring a lawsuit in court, but the scope of the lawsuit and the potential remedies are limited and ineffective.

An Act Protecting Injured Workers, written through a partnership between Immigrant Worker Center Collaborative leaders and our Legal Committee, strengthens the anti-retaliation law, provides for an administrative complaint and investigation mechanism for enforcement, and otherwise addresses employer misconduct that prevents workers from receiving timely medical care and benefits.

On July 9, MassCOSH held a press conference and testified at a hearing for this important legislation, bringing many workers to tell their powerful stories.

Our 2019-2020 priorities include, but are not limited to:

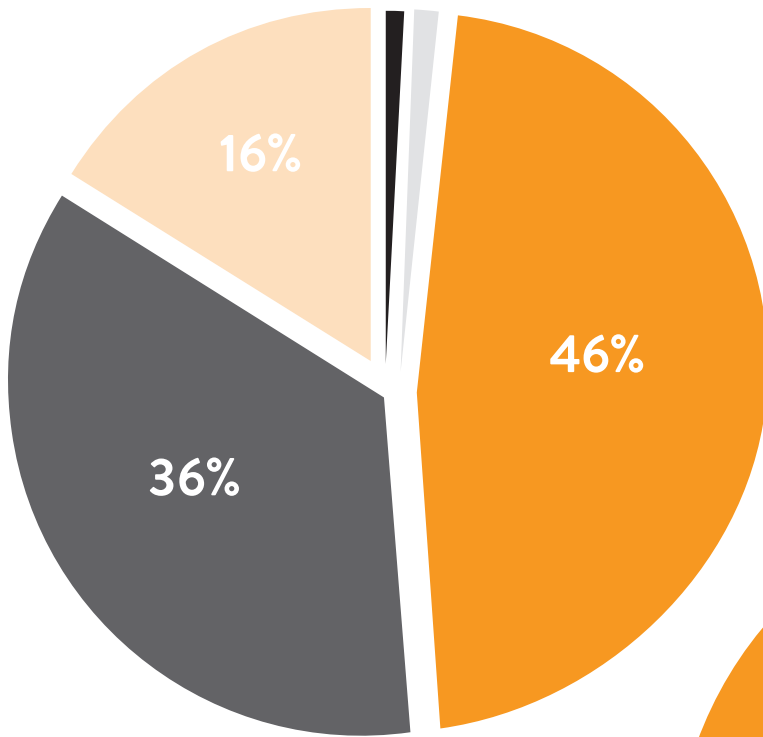
- An Act Protecting Injured Workers to protect injured workers who seek medical care or file workers' compensation from retaliation.
- An Act Relative to Workplace Safety, a responsible contracting law, will require companies seeking to do business with the Commonwealth, or seeking a trenching permit, to report their record of safety violations as part of the bidding process.
- Nearly \$700 million in wages are stolen from about 350,000 low-wage workers each year in Massachusetts. An Act to Prevent Wage Theft, Promote Employer Accountability, and Enhance Public Enforcement will protect workers and enhance enforcement.
- The tightly-knit Massachusetts firefighting community lost eight members to occupational illness in 2018. An Act to Protect Children, Families, and Firefighters from Harmful Flame Retardants bans the sale of certain harmful flame retardant chemicals in children's products and residential furniture.
- MassCOSH is also working to enforce full implementation of the public sector OSHA law, and to ensuring that recycling workers are paid a Living Wage per the commitment secured in the City of Boston's Zero Waste Plans.

We could not achieve any of these policy goals without our coalition partnerships:

**ALLIANCE FOR A HEALTHY TOMORROW**  
**BOSTON/MASSACHUSETTS EDUCATION JUSTICE ALLIANCE**  
**DORCHESTER CROSSROADS**  
**GREATER BOSTON LABOR COUNCIL**  
**IMMIGRANT WORKER CENTER COLLABORATIVE**  
**INTERFAITH WORKER JUSTICE**

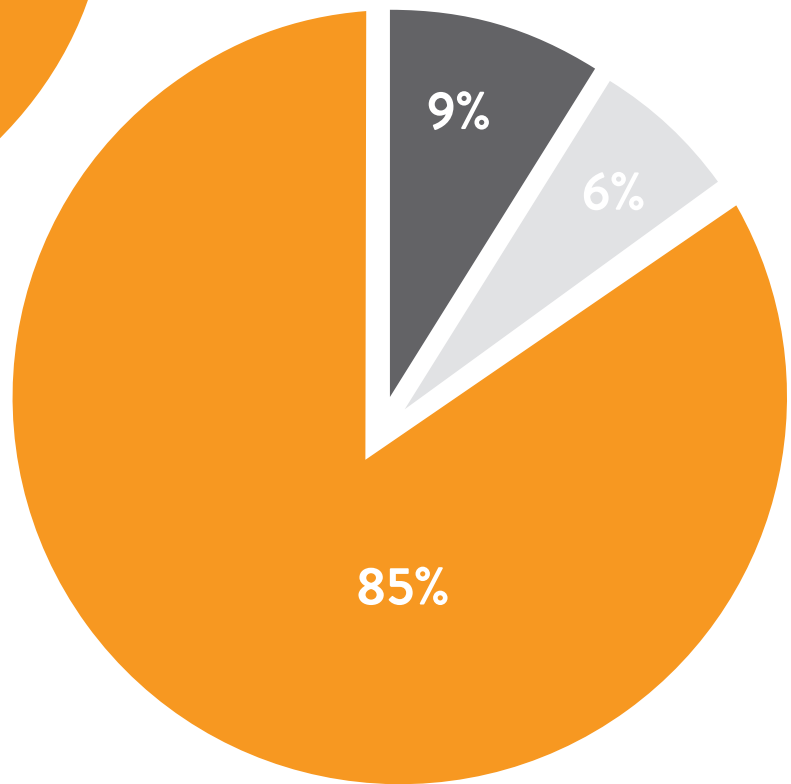
**MASSACHUSETTS ASTHMA ACTION PARTNERSHIP**  
**MASSACHUSETTS COALITION OF DOMESTIC WORKERS**  
**MAY FIRST COALITION**  
**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH**  
**WAGE THEFT COALITION**  
**ZERO WASTE BOSTON**

**FUNDRAISING & MEMBERSHIP**  
**MOST RECENT AUDITED FINANCIALS**



**FY2018 REVENUE**

- 46% GRANTS (\$422,011)
- 36% CONTRACTS (\$329,029)
- 16% CONTRIBUTIONS (\$146,469)
- 1% PROGRAM SERVICES FEES (\$9,692)
- 1% INTEREST/DIVIDEND (\$5,561)



**FY2018 EXPENSES**

- 85% PROGRAM SERVICES (\$780,175)
- 9% GENERAL ADMIN (\$83,266)
- 6% FUNDRAISING (\$50,676)

Our work is made possible thanks to the generosity of our individual donors in the communities we serve. We are immensely thankful for their commitment to our work; we are a stronger, more capable organization because of them. We welcome you to join our efforts to protect and promote workers by making a tax-deductible gift of any amount.

For those who seek to make a lasting impact in the fight for good, safe jobs, our Sustaining Member Program allows you to easily make gifts at regular intervals, joining a special circle of like-minded advocates who enjoy special MassCOSH benefits.

We also welcome you to attend one of our many events, including:

- Celebrating the Movement
- MassCOSH’s Annual Meeting and Social
- Workers’ Memorial Day Commemoration
- And many public actions and Statehouse visits throughout the year

For more information on the above, please email [INFO@MASSCOSH.ORG](mailto:INFO@MASSCOSH.ORG)

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**INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY**  
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As part of International Workers' Memorial Day, MassCOSH plays a lead role organizing a powerful gathering to remember those who we have lost to occupational injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. The event is part of our Families of Fallen Workers Support Services efforts. MassCOSH provides grieving families with tools, resources, and support to navigate workers' compensation and OSHA investigations and works with families to change unjust policies and unsafe working conditions.

**VISIT [MASSCOSH.ORG](http://MASSCOSH.ORG) FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE SERVICES.**



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