



FEDERATION OF PROTESTANT WELFARE AGENCIES

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FPWA LAUNCHES AWARENESS DRIVE TO URGE NYC CITY COUNCIL TO FUND BUDGET INITIATIVES THAT PROVIDE RESOURCES FOR THE GROWING POPULATION OF LOW-WAGE WORKERS IN NEW YORK CITY

FPWA & coalition members to conduct mass letter writing campaign, phone banking, social media outreach & awareness efforts to amplify initiatives for underserved communities in NYC.

New York, NY (June 10, 2015)---The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA) and its network of coalition members are engaging in an effort to urge the New York City Council to fund budget initiatives that help low-wage workers and other underserved communities. Led by Jennifer Jones Austin, CEO and Executive Director of FPWA, the effort is taking place to amplify the needs of New Yorkers in low-wage career paths and provide them with support to help even the playing field. Kicking off the effort, today coalition members are phone banking at FPWA offices as well launching a social media campaign to raise awareness of the three budget priorities.

Among the programs that FPWA is seeking is \$2.34 million in funding for the Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative. The Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative offers low-wage workers the opportunity to become entrepreneurs and control their working conditions by becoming worker-owners. This type of business model is proven to provide higher wages, more benefits, and better job stability. FPWA and the Worker Cooperative Coalition more than doubled the worker cooperative ecosystem in New York City from 20 existing businesses to almost 50 through a first of its kind citywide investment made in the final city budget for FY 2015. The Initiative will focus on three areas: Creation of cooperatives in low income areas, Business assistance to grow jobs in existing cooperatives, Education and outreach to entrepreneurs and communities.

Access Health NYC Initiative is another priority designed to address the lack of resources for culturally and linguistically appropriate education, and outreach efforts within our health care system. Access Health NYC is a grassroots advocacy campaign of the People's Budget Coalition for Public Health. The \$5 million initiative will support training, monitoring, evaluation and providing technical assistance to immigrant serving community-based organizations (CBOs). Nearly 80% of the funds will be re-granted to CBOs to conduct at least 30 education and outreach events targeting people who are uninsured, newly insured, speak English as a second language, are disabled or homeless, were formerly incarcerated and identified as LGBTQ.

The third priority is the Day Laborer Workforce Initiative. FPWA and the Day Laborer Workforce Coalition are seeking \$365,000 from the NYC Council to support the expansion of the existing four day laborer centers to provide services in all five boroughs. The Coalition estimates that there are currently 8,000-10,000 day laborers in New York City. Services provided by the day laborer centers include dignified physical space for day laborers to meet, referrals to jobs or support services, legal services to address issues such as wage theft, as well as workforce training and development. According to a New York day laborer named Jesus Bueno, he was motivated to go to a worker center for a type of organized sense of security and structure. By going to a center, it helped him feel a sense of belonging and protection that was not available on the streets. Wage robbery is a commonality and there is more protection granted to workers when they have the support of day laborer centers behind them.

According to FPWA CEO & Executive Director, Jennifer Jones Austin: "In order to create shared prosperity, we must encourage the City Council to support measures that will lead to the reduction of poverty and create opportunities for low-wage earners. These three initiatives total around \$7.7 million, which would be close to 0.001% of the City budget. This is a modest investment to improve the lives of thousands of New Yorkers."

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