

Four year review

Brown/Sims Administration

In the past four years, the WSLC has made significant strides in meeting and exceeding goals set for the council by our executive board, and affiliates. Here's a look back on all the good work we accomplished together.

2019:

- At the start of the year, we saw gains for working people in the State Legislature, including labor-supported legislation that provides post-*Janus* clarity and consistency for public employee union membership in Washington state, important policies supporting immigrant workers, a bill granting bargaining rights for assistant attorneys general.
- And after a decade of fighting for it, we finally won meal and rest breaks for frontline healthcare workers in Washington.
- In May, we came together as a board to rebuild trust and strengthen our unity as a movement.
- We identified key focus areas for the Brown/Sims administration; building statewide solidarity between East and West, rural and urban; investing in organizing; advocating for a worker-first green energy economy; and using our racial & gender justice work as a tool for building worker power.
- As a result, we increased staff capacity, hiring an Organizer with an emphasis on supporting our CLCs and local organizing, and a Legislative Director to support our government affairs work.
- We started the work of formally developing a CLC network, working together to foster connections between CLCs across the state and sharing resources and knowledge.
- At Convention, we rallied together at Providence HQ, standing together with our siblings in healthcare and calling on Providence to do what's right for patients and workers.
- That fall, we fought for an end to the ban on affirmative action in Washington State.

2020:

- In January of 2020, our movement marched with SEIU 1199NW through downtown Seattle, calling on Swedish to prioritize patient and staff wellbeing and safety.
- Hundreds of union members gathered in Olympia for the WSLC Legislative Conference and rallied on the Capitol steps urging legislators to protect public employee safety and privacy. One of our last rallies before...

- COVID hit in early 2020. Washington's labor movement was ready to spring into action.
- The WSLC convened regular calls to solicit questions and identify problems facing memberships. Staff worked with experts and public officials to get answers and find solutions.
- Across our movement we coordinated with the Governor's office and LNI to develop workplace safety guidance, and expanded unemployment insurance eligibility during the height of the crisis.
- We held townhalls with medical experts and public health officials, seeking to use our networks and reach to share trusted information.
- We stood with workers at fruit packing facilities all over the Yakima area who seized their power and led a successful strike for hazard pay and PPE.
- That May, we survived a 13 hour virtual COPE convention - technical challenges were no match for our commitment to democracy.
- 2020 was a heavy year. In the wake of the murder of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, the affiliated unions of the WSLC deepened our commitment to building an anti-racist labor movement, a true home for all working people.
- The WSLC's Racial Justice Committee put on virtual programming to celebrate Juneteenth and educate about Black folks role in building our country and our movement.
- We hired a Director of Racial & Gender Justice to move our Race & Labor program from a training to an active campaign.
- At our first virtual Convention in September of 2020, we passed a resolution calling for police reform.
- We updated our Constitution with gender inclusive language and expanded on our foundational commitment to fight for the whole working person - for economic justice and racial justice.
- The 2020 Election was make or break. We ran our Labor Neighbor program, turning union members out in massive numbers to vote for pro-worker candidates.
- We helped elect Joe Biden, and the first woman Vice President in our nation's history and defended pro-worker majorities here in Washington.
- Reading the tea leaves, we organized 'Democracy Defender' virtual trainings, seeking to provide info and reassurance to folks concern about far-right extremist attacks on our democracy. We worked with local experts to provide info on deescalation tactics, skills for caring for ourselves and the people around us.

2021:

- In the 2021 session, we sought to solidify and build on the workplace safety regulations and work place rights we won for working people in the height of the COVID crisis.
- Despite the challenges of a virtual session, we had some big wins.
- A robust set of health emergency labor standards were adopted for frontline workers to better secure the promise of workers' compensation benefits, protect them from retaliation, and to ensure that COVID outbreaks on the job are reported to the state Department of Labor and Industries so proper safety measures can be better established.
- We worked with community to advocate for the creation of an unemployment insurance fund.
- We won overtime pay for farmworkers.
- In spring, we created a Digital Organizer position to support our Communications, political, organizing, and race & labor work.
- We sponsored COVID-19 vaccination clinics in Yakima Valley and held a vaccine town hall for union members to get answers to their questions.
- In our Race & Labor program, we partnered with Labor Notes to develop a trainer certification program, identifying union staff and rank and file members to become trainers in our program.
- We hosted an Instagram live with Black women labor leaders in celebration of Juneteenth, featuring April Sims, Cherika Carter & Andrea Vaughn, of WFSE.
- In July, we welcomed late AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka to our virtual Convention; how thankful are we to have had the opportunity to hear from him one last time.
- In Fall of 2021, we launched the Immigrant & Worker Justice toolkit, a collection of resources for advocating for immigrant members and co-workers, and building immigrant worker power.
- Through a collaborative process centering the voices of BIPOC leaders and policy advocates, we developed and launched the Racial Equity Toolkit, a framework for reimagining what equitable policy – and policy making – can look like.

In 2022...

- The 2022 legislative session was a short 60-day sprint, but Washington's union movement achieved some significant wins, particularly on budget priorities and job-creating infrastructure investments.

- Wins include a massive \$17 billion transportation investment package with no gas-tax increase; funding of several mid-contract cost-of-living adjustments for critical frontline state employees in recognition of their pandemic sacrifices; and tax-break accountability with the inclusion of strong labor standards in tax incentives for the film industry, data centers and clean-technology manufacturing facilities.
- Two labor-priority apprenticeship bills were approved to facilitate the establishment and expansion of registered apprenticeship programs, and to help apprentices access the Washington College Grant and get academic credit for their training experience.
- Another priority bill passed to promote clean energy production by reforming the state's siting and permitting process for new energy facilities.
- In the spring, WSLC staff supported the Teamsters concrete strike, and tulip workers in Mt. Vernon.
- Our organizers traveled to Bessemer, Alabama to support RWDSU's union drive at Amazon.
- The WSLC Women's Committee hosted 'Barrier Breakers' an outdoor obstacle course celebrating the strength and resilience of women in our movement.
- In May, we hosted our first in-person COPE Endorsing Convention since the pandemic began.
- Throughout the year, we hit major goals in our Race & Labor training program; certifying dozens of trainers state-wide from diverse backgrounds and unions, and 100% of CLCs participating in the program.
- In June, we mobilized in response to the Dobbs decision that threw out the constitutional right to abortion that has existed for most, if not all, of our lives. We proclaimed that abortion rights are workers rights, and urged the national AFL-CIO to vocally defend reproductive justice.
- In July, we held our first in-person convention since 2019, gathering together in Wenatchee.
- We passed a new slate of resolutions to guide the WSLC's work, including a resolution in support of reproductive freedom.
- Workers flexed their power this summer and fall. We stood with sandwich makers at Homegrown as they struck over dangerously hot workplaces – congrats to these workers who just yesterday won their union with UNITE HERE local 8!
- We provided strike support for educators in Kent, Ridgefield, Eatonville, and Seattle, and supported 1,000 IAM woodworkers in a six week strike that spanned over a dozen picket lines in Oregon and Washington.

- Starting in July, we ran our successful Labor Neighbor program heading into August primaries. We ramped up again with GOTV in the fall, hosting virtual ~~phone~~ *fun* banks and multiple neighborhood canvasses each weekend.
- Those efforts paid off, and WSLC-candidates made a strong showing in the 2022 midterm elections. U.S. Sen. Patty Murray and Rep. Kim Schrier were re-elected in races some pundits believed were too close to call, and Washington's 3rd Congressional District seat flipped with the election of labor-endorsed Democratic newcomer Marie Gluesenkamp Perez.
- Meanwhile, pro-worker majorities were expanded in both houses of the Washington State Legislature, and several close legislative races were won by labor-endorsed candidates in districts where the Labor Neighbor program was active.