



Domestic Worker Standards Board 2024 Retreat with facilitator Nicole Keenan and SDWC members

DOMESTIC WORKERS STANDARDS BOARD

2024-2026 Workplan

The Domestic Workers Standards Board formed to help implement Seattle’s Domestic Workers Ordinance. This workplan outlines the Board’s goals and priorities.

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Mission, Vision, Values

Mission

The Domestic Workers Standards Board is committed to improving the working conditions of domestic workers by providing a place for workers, employers, organizations, and the public to make suggestions to strengthen, enforce, implement, and expand on the Domestic Workers Ordinance (DWO).

Vision

In developing our 2024 - 2026 workplan, we aim to work toward the following vision:

- Continue to create a “culture shift” to make domestic work visible, valued, and sustainable
- Ensure workers and hiring entities are informed and supported, while ensuring that hiring entities are also accountable and regulated
- Where possible, ensure that better communication and relationships are cultivated between workers and hiring entities, across languages and cultures
- The Board continues to be leaders on domestic worker standards

Values

In our work, we commit to the following guiding principles:

- Guarantee that domestic workers’ voices and needs are actively included in our board and directly inform our work.
- Apply an intersectional lens to any suggestions, with the intention of ensuring that communities most marginalized are seriously considered and positively impacted.
- Work collaboratively with organizations and entities in the City of Seattle that are engaged in domestic workers’ rights work, or immigrant justice, labor rights, disability justice, racial equity, and other any intersecting issues.
- Work so that everyone may have access to affordable and accessible healthcare, childcare, homecare and other basic needs.
- Implement and proactively work within an anti-racist framework.

To work towards its mission and vision, the board has organized its work in three distinct areas: Policy, Tools & Communication, and Outreach.

Priorities for 2024 – 2026

The Domestic Workers Standards Board will dedicate much of 2024 and 2025 to regroup, analyze, and strategize with this new group of members. Already the DWSB has built strong connections with a variety of community partners who regularly attend Board meetings. Their valuable input, along with discussions with city and civic departments, will help inform and guide the Board's work. The Board plans to continue educating the public about the DWO, build relationships with the new Seattle City Council, and dedicate time for internal development of the Board. Here are some high-level issues the Board will be exploring during this workplan cycle:

- Outreach to domestic workers about the Domestic Worker Ordinance through virtual Know Your Rights workshops and in-person outreach. This outreach effort will also aim to specifically reach gardeners/landscapers, AANHPI domestic workers, and newly arrived immigrant & asylum seekers.
- With a virtually new City Council, the DWSB will prioritize relationship-building between Board members and the new councilmembers. This will be an opportunity for new councilmembers to learn more about the Board, the DWO and current work, but also for members to learn more about the newly elected officials and their relationship with domestic work.
- As the DWSB enters its fifth year of operation, several members have finished their initial and second term, leaving positions available for new interested members. There are some that continue to support the Board in any capacity to share institutional knowledge. The Board plans to create leadership development opportunities for both existing and emerging leaders to find their role within the Board.
- Supporting hiring entities understand the DWO and providing any resources to achieve this continues to be a priority of the DWSB. The Board will support the Paid Sick and Safe Time education campaign to educate hiring entities and domestic workers that are covered by this law and bridge the gap.

The DWSB is committed above all to increasing the dignity and value of domestic work, ensuring these workers share a fair and equitable place in the Seattle employment market.

Policy

Current situation and challenges

Economic barriers for both hiring entities and domestic workers, and the public perception that domestic workers are not entitled to rights, complicate enforcement and compliance with the new and existing labor rights of domestic workers. Many domestic workers lack the powerful tool of a collective voice, and thus are unable to meaningfully address unfortunate common workplace issues such as racism, sexism, and classism in their workplaces.

Desired result

Continue creating a “culture shift” that make domestic work more visible, valued, and sustainable by creating contract tools, supporting the Portable Paid Time Off research, and Paid Sick and Safe Time campaign.

Goal	Strategy, Actions, and Measures
Develop a pilot model for portable Paid Time Off for domestic workers in Seattle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support OLS/SDWC in the research for PTO models • Research into public funding options • Participate in city budget process to advocate for additional funding • Continue to educate councilmembers about PTO by sharing employer, hiring entities, and worker stories in one-to-one meetings
Build relationships with the new City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with Hand in Hand to bring domestic employers to meet with the new council to introduce the Board and learn from councilmembers

Tools & Communication

Current situation and challenges

Domestic workers’ workplace can be a deeply personal space and isolating. For example, household employers may have no day-to-day contact with workers who maintain their most intimate spaces and workers may not have any interaction with other domestic workers. Compounding this sense of isolation are frequent language barriers between employers and employees. The isolation of this workforce makes education and enforcement difficult.

The DWSB is also in a transition period between veteran members and new members, thus the Board is also interested in identifying internal tools to continue the development of Board members.

Desired results

Where possible, ensure that better communication and relationships are cultivated between workers and hiring entities, across languages and cultures. Work on strategies that generate public awareness of the DWO, the DWSB, and OLS.

The Board explores leadership training opportunities and other strategies to strengthen member participation.

Goal	Strategy, Actions, and Measures
Increase knowledge of how to draft model agreements and more equitable contract negotiations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop model contract language between hiring entity / employer and domestic worker • Develop short educational video or host workshops about contracts
Strengthen the capacity of the DWSB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board engage in ongoing learning and development to help it be more effective, and to prepare people for leadership roles on the Board • All available positions on the Board are full and there is a system to help transition into leadership roles • Create a “circle of leaders” to help move the DWO message around and recommend new board members
Increase ease of compliance and understanding of current laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop updated language that is more relatable for domestic employers / hiring entities • Provide a storytelling toolkit for employers to show how compliance encourages good work and loyalty • Provide more workshops that focus on contract language and negotiation for workers
Increase knowledge about the Office of Labor Standards and its availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live chat (in language) workshops about OLS • Social media post about OLS • A brochure about the Domestic Worker Standards Board • Promote and uplift successful enforcement/earned media • Provide recommendations on OLS website to make it more user friendly

Outreach

Current situation and challenges

The nature of domestic work continues to present myriads of challenges for successful outreach. Some domestic workers, such as gardeners and landscapers, don’t self-identify as domestic workers; they, and many hiring entities, see domestic work as primarily female. Although OLS has determined and publicized DWO violation, many domestic workers are still wary of interacting with civic departments. Hiring entities may not see themselves as employers, and domestic workers may fear job security for reporting employer violations. Both domestic workers and hiring entities may have a desire to preserve the benefits of the informal economy, such as flexibility.

Desired results

Ensure domestic workers and hiring entities are informed and supported, while also ensuring that hiring entities are accountable and regulated. Convey the DWO as a “floor not a ceiling,”—the DWO is the groundwork for successful and mutually beneficial employer-employee relationships, not the end word.

Goal	Strategy, Actions, and Measures
Outreach to Domestic Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach to domestic workers through Know Your Rights virtual and in-person info sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outreach to gardeners ○ Outreach to AAPI domestic workers ○ Outreach to newly arrived immigrants and asylum seekers
Outreach to Domestic Worker Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Paid Sick and Safe Time outreach campaign • Outreach to 3rd party platforms that offer jobs to domestic workers to provide resources • Explore ways to increase employer / constituent stakeholder’s public involvement
Outreach to the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it clear that all workers regardless of immigration status have workers’ rights
Support and advocate for the Community Outreach and Education Fund (COEF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the City budget process to support the COEF grants