



**City of Seattle**  
**Labor Standards Advisory Commission**  
**& Domestic Worker Standards Board**

Councilmember Dan Strauss  
Council Budget Chair  
City of Seattle

Re: Return of Funding to the Office of Labor Standards in the 2025 budget

Dear Chair Strauss,

We hope this letter finds you well. On behalf of LSAC and DWSB, we want to express our strong support for the restoration of funding for the Business Outreach and Education Fund (BOEF) and the Community Outreach and Education Fund (COEF) in the upcoming budget. These funds play a critical role in educating our businesses while ensuring that community organizations have the resources to help residents thrive through local economic development initiatives.

BOEF and COEF grantees bring deep connections to diverse communities across our city, and decades of expertise in community and business engagement, outreach, and systems navigation. Current grantees include, among others: Tabor 100, El Centro de la Raza, Chinese Information & Service Center, Fair Work Center, and Business Impact NW. Collectively, they have helped to ensure that labor standards resources can be accessed by the workers and businesses who may experience the most barriers to access due to language, finances, or other systemic barriers.

For the past decade, the BOEF and COEF have provided invaluable resources for small businesses and workers, enabling them to navigate regulations, access resources, and grow sustainably. In a time of economic uncertainty, it is more important than ever to empower our local businesses with education and outreach to help make these aspects of running a business easier. Investing in this proactive outreach also helps ensure that the city's compliance resources are used as efficiently as possible and that workers are not being exploited by low-road corporations. The work done through these programs do not only benefit individual workers and businesses; they help to enhance community awareness of our local standards, and contribute to a vibrant and more inclusive economy.

**In the past 18 months alone, BOEF and COEF grantees have reached more than 9,000 workers and businesses in more than twenty languages.** The impact of that work is felt across the city. For example, Hand in Hand, a BOEF grantee, used its funding this past summer to conduct door-to-door outreach to households about the Domestic Worker Ordinance. Since employers of domestic workers often don't even recognize that they are employers, they are a

group that has been notoriously hard to reach with information about the DWO. This door-to-door outreach was an innovative and effective way of disseminating information, with many households indicating that they were unaware of the specific provisions of the DWO and expressing gratitude for being provided with the information.

Similarly, COEF grantees Al Noor and Somali Community Services have worked for years offering community based training to East African immigrant community members; often, workers come to them as they find their first jobs in Seattle, and are learning about the rights they have on the job for the first time. These workers are often unfamiliar with government agencies and what resources would be available for them if their wages are stolen or if they are fired for using sick leave. Al Noor and SCS's culturally and linguistically tailored community based education is essential to ensuring those workers have a trusted place to turn for help. Restoring BOEF/COEF funding will ensure that important community based outreach like this can continue.

Additionally, we are concerned about the proposed reduction in positions within the Office of Labor Standards (OLS), particularly in enforcement. This reduction does not align with Seattle's recent record investments in affordable housing (a sector known to have high rates of wage theft) and our commitment to strong labor standards. Effective enforcement is crucial to ensuring that all workers are treated fairly and that businesses understand and adhere to the regulations designed to protect employees. By reducing investments in labor standards enforcement, we risk undermining the progress we have made in creating equitable labor practices in our city.

We urge you to prioritize the restoration of BOEF and COEF funding and to reconsider the proposed cuts to OLS positions. Supporting this funding in your balanced budget is essential for maintaining the integrity of our labor standards and for promoting economic equity across Seattle.

Both LSAC and the DWSB thank you for your attention to this area while you build a budget that will set our city up for equitable growth and prosperity in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Billy Hetherington and Alexis Rodich

Co-Chairs of the Labor Standards Advisory Committee

Silvia Gonzalez and Baylie Freeman

Domestic Workers Standard Board

