

Vermont Workers' Center



New Member Handbook

Second Edition- Spring 2015



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**Everyday that we choose to organize and to struggle, we are already
creating the world that we seek.**

What does it mean to be a member?

The Vermont Workers' Center is a member-led organization fighting for economic justice and human dignity. Your membership help us build a strong organization, owned by the members, guided by our principles, and true to our mission.



VWC Membership: Membership shall be open to all regardless of union affiliation, gender, race, profession, disability, political beliefs, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or nationality. Membership shall be open to any individual who or organization which:

- Attends a new member orientation (either group meeting or a one on one meeting)
- Agrees with the Vermont Workers' Center mission and strategic orientation
- Takes the solidarity action pledge [below]
- Signs up to become a dues paying member at any level (see fundraising and dues section for this proposal)

Each member shall be entitled to vote on matters brought before the annual Membership Assembly. The Annual Meeting shall occur on the second Saturday of November, unless otherwise noticed, at a time and place decided upon by the Coordinating Committee. Notice of the Annual Meeting, together with an agenda of the business to be conducted at that meeting shall be sent to members by email or other mail, no less than fifteen days prior to the scheduled meeting. Each member, whether an organization or an individual shall cast one vote on any business transacted at the Annual Meeting or any Special Meeting.



What does it mean to be a member? (cont.)

Membership Dues

Member dues are member-determined, based on the principle of equity — meaning that as a member, you choose the dues amount that is right for you or your family. The minimum is \$1/month or \$12/year. On average, members choose \$15-\$25/month or \$180-\$300/year. The VWC will make arrangements for those unable to pay membership dues. To request a dues waiver, please email heather@workerscenter.org or contact an existing VWC member.

VWC Solidarity Action Pledge

During the coming year, I pledge to be there at least five times to:

- Stand in solidarity with workers seeking to organize and bargain collectively for a job with justice, a living wage, a fair contract and a voice at work;
- Join with my neighbors and other members of my community to grow a grassroots movement with which, together, we can successfully demand public policy that serves the needs of all people — including a dignified standard of living, a safe and healthful environment, the best quality healthcare, childcare, housing, education and transportation;
- Defend the needs of people against the exploitation, by corporations and others in power, of workers, communities and the environment;
- Work to recognize and put an end to all forms of social injustice, including oppression based on race, gender, disability and class.



VWC Mission & Strategic Orientation

OUR MISSION

The Vermont Workers' Center is a democratic, member-run organization dedicated to organizing for the human rights of the people of Vermont. We seek an economically just and democratic Vermont in which all residents' can meet their human needs and enjoy their human rights, including dignified work, universal healthcare, housing, education, childcare, transportation and a healthy environment. We work to build a democratic, diverse movement of people affected by injustice that is locally focused, coordinated statewide, and connected nationally. We work with organized labor to strengthen workers' rights, and with other allied organizations in support of other human rights. We are committed to taking action on the full range of issues of concern to people most impacted by economic and social injustice, and to building strategic alliances nationally and internationally.

OUR STRATEGIC ORIENTATION

- We must grow a large and committed base to engage in collective struggle and build our power.
- We must act together to hold those in power accountable for ensuring our rights.
- We must make a leader of each of us and educate ourselves well in both history and strategy.
- We must use a consistent human rights framework to facilitate our organizing, develop our campaigns and formulate our policy positions.
- We must tell our own stories to counter the influence of mainstream media controlled by those in power.
- We must seek to fund our movement from our base, so that we are accountable only to our members.
- We must foster solidarity and build a broader movement by joining with other groups seeking economic and social justice.
- We believe that the most effective means of change is people engaging in collective struggle to place direct demands upon those who hold power.

“Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.” – Sun Tzu

VWC History

In 1996, a group called Central Vermonters For A Livable Wage began organizing to pass municipal living wage ordinances and connect with local living wage groups around the state. Soon after, a statewide group started the Vermont Livable Wage Campaign and began a major push to increase the state minimum wage. In 1998, a small but passionate group of these low-income workers created the Vermont Workers' Center (VWC) and started the Vermont Workers' Rights Hotline, which is still in existence today.

The Hotline answers hundreds of calls per year, to assist workers whose rights are being violated in the workplace. The VWC built a statewide Rapid Response Network of supporters of workplace and economic justice issues and began mobilizing solidarity support for union organizing campaigns and contract fights. We realized that

fights to end racism, sexism, homophobia and other oppressions were directly tied to workers rights. This early group worked with local anti-death penalty activists, and created workshops for youth on the cross-sections of racism and classism. In 2001, the VWC joined Jobs With Justice. After joining Jobs with Justice, we became a formal union coalition which included over forty local unions.



Over the past 15 years, the VWC has been involved in hundreds of workplace justice campaigns in a broad range of industries including: hospitals, nursing homes, public schools, state employees, municipal workers, construction workers, food service workers, retail workers, factory workers, utility workers, bus drivers, and mental health workers.

From 2003-2005, we entered into a joint partnership with the United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE) to start the Montpelier Downtown Workers

Union. This effort set out to create an organization of the 800+ retail and restaurant workers in Vermont's capital to fight for livable wages and improved working conditions. While we were unable to successfully organize the entire downtown workforce, many people that came out of that drive are still active VWC leaders and became union organizers with whom we work closely in our current coalition.

In 2006, we began a multi-union coalition called the Burlington Livable City Coalition. We have had a lot of success in Burlington, helping win ground-breaking livable wage victories for public school paraeducators (NEA), custodians and food service workers (AFSCME) where many workers went from earning \$8/hr to over \$14/hr. We also worked with Burlington tenants and parents, with the support of the teachers' and nurses' union, to pass a city ordinance to protect children from lead paint poisoning in rental units.

In 2007 we launched our first Solidarity School, a two day training focused on developing the next generation of labor leaders and organizers. Solidarity School is now part of a broader educational and leadership development program for our members called the People's University for Learning and Liberation (PULL) which includes Solidarity School, monthly organizing and movement-building trainings, advanced studies, and thematic workshops across the state.

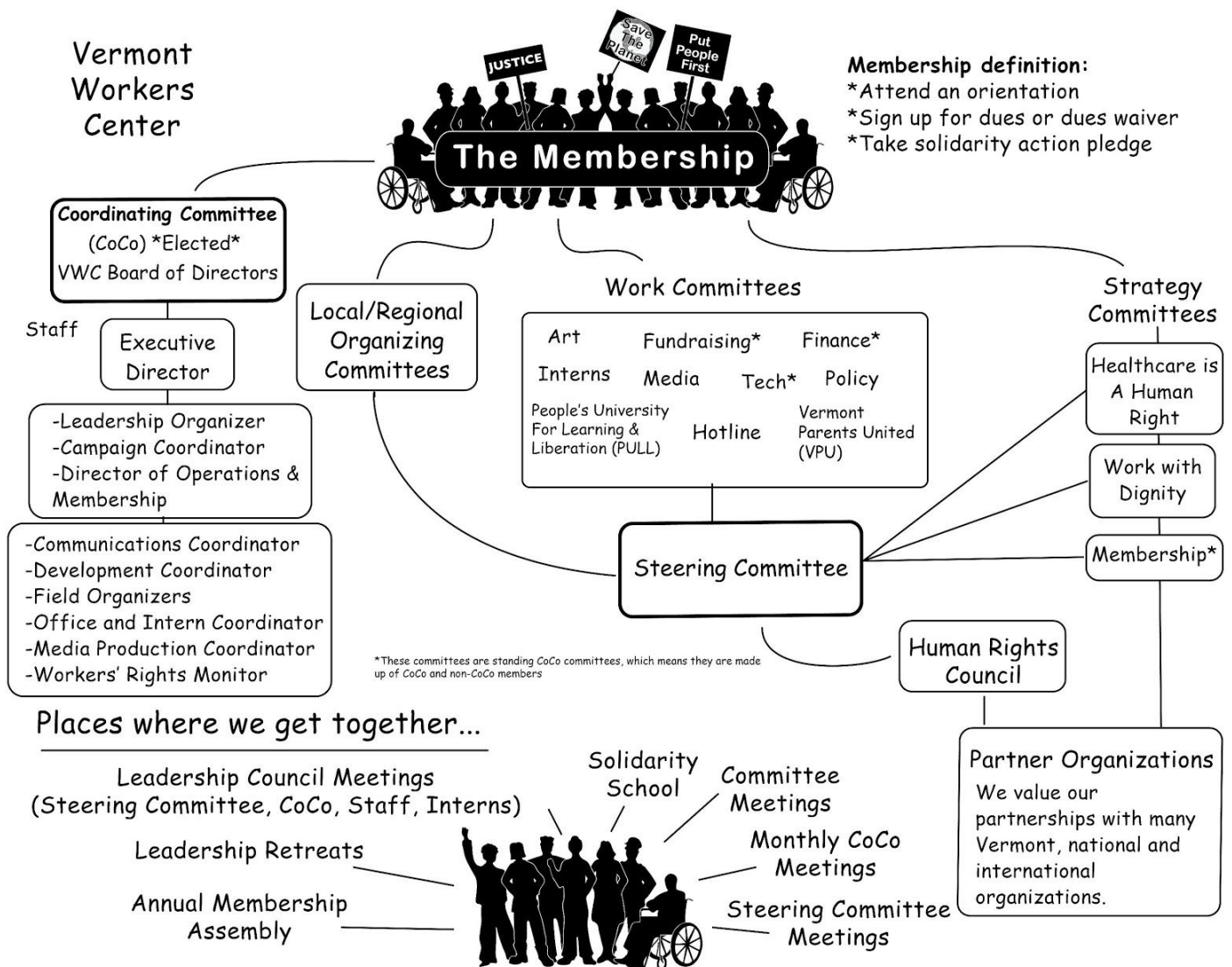


In 2008 we launched a statewide grassroots organizing campaign called Healthcare Is a Human Right (HCHR) in partnership with many of Vermont's progressive unions and local community organizations. This is when we first started adopting the human rights principles that we still use today. In 2011, Vermont became the first state to pass universal healthcare legislation because of

the grassroots organizing of the Healthcare is a Human Right Campaign. The VWC launched it's Put People First: People's Budget campaign the same year, which calls for a state budget that is based on our human rights principles. As we continue to grow, we have expanded our campaigns, but remain true to our roots of worker's rights and solidarity for worker's struggles. It is exciting to think about our future victories and how our history will be written.

In 2011, Workers' Center members volunteered in clean up efforts after disastrous flooding caused by Tropical Storm Irene. We saw how mobile home parks were some of the hardest hit areas with hundreds of people struggling with the cost of removing their destroyed homes. Tropical Storm Irene showed how in Vermont, as around the world, poor and working class people bear the brunt of climate change impacts. We helped mobile home park residents get organized to demand —and win — the free removal of damaged homes across the state.

Organizational Chart



The People's Recipe

We know it takes strategy to get where we want to go. The VWC has developed this recipe as a way to articulate some of the strategies we've learned we must utilize in order to build our movement. We call this the People's Recipe. The most important thing we have learned is that all of these ingredients are needed to build long-term power and move toward systemic change.

Base-Building

We bring new people into our movement while building capacity within our existing base of leaders. One common way we do this is by using organizing tools such as petitions, postcards, photo petitions, surveys, organizing meetings, community meetings, and door-knocking. All of these are opportunities to identify new members while building the capacity of our base by asking existing members to practice their organizing skills.

Political Education

We believe we must develop an understanding of how things work now so we can better understand how to change them. We must understand the systems of oppression that are at work in our current society, how they impact our lives, how they were created and how they are maintained. At the same time we must also develop our vision of an alternative world based on human rights so we can work toward that vision. We do this through weekend political education trainings, educational activities at organizing meetings, leadership retreats, studying together, movie discussion nights and more.



Human Rights Framework

We use a human rights framework to describe our vision, inspire our organizing, and to evaluate and propose policy. We use a set of principles to define what human rights means to us. Those principles are universality, equity, transparency, accountability, and participation. This framework helps us to fight each of our current battles in a way that does not just reform the current system, but challenges the underlying structure and advances our broader vision.

Strategic Communications to Change the Story

We recognize that successful movement organizing is more than just moving bodies, it's about moving hearts and minds and changing the dominant stories. Our most powerful tool to change the story is sharing own experiences. We do this through the Battle of the Story workshop, the Stories Project, writing letters to the editor, editorial board meetings, VWC TV, Equal Time Radio, Put People First! Radio, videos, photos, and more.

Grassroots Fundraising & Building Capacity

Through a variety of means, our communities and members contribute what they can to fund our movement. We do this through events like the Exercise Your Rights, signing up for dues (giving a little bit each month), and passing the hat at meetings. We are most accountable to our communities when we are funded by our communities. Foundation and other institutional funding often comes with strings attached. These funding sources are not only unreliable, but will almost always disappear as we continue to challenge existing power relationships. This is our organization and we should own it!



Holding Decision-Makers Accountable

We believe that the most effective means of change is people engaging in collective struggle to place direct demands upon those who hold power. We engage and hold accountable those who have the power to make decisions regarding our human rights through






candidate forums, accountability meeting with elected officials, direct action (such as the May 1st Rally, strikes, marches on the boss), legislator call-in days, reclaiming political spaces (like packing the Statehouse), and more.

Solidarity & Movement Building

We understand that solidarity means more than just supporting other organizations' work. We believe that in order to win our vision of human rights it is necessary to build strong long-term relationships with organizations and networks across issue areas and constituencies. We must learn from each other, develop shared strategy and tactics, and together grow the people power necessary to achieve our common vision. We engage in movement building by participating in national alliances, doing exchanges with organizations in other states, standing in solidarity with workers' struggles, organizing together for events such as the People's Convention for Human Rights, and more.

Human Rights Principles

What are human rights? What do we mean when we say “Healthcare is a Human Right”? Our human rights grow out of our needs as human beings. We believe that human rights are what we all need to live lives with dignity. That includes things like healthcare, safe housing, education, work with dignity, food, and a healthy environment. We come together to form communities, and governments, in order to fulfill our human rights. In order to tell whether our human rights are being fulfilled, we use the 5 principles: universality, equity, accountability, participation, and transparency. Below are descriptions of those principles!

Principle	Definition	Image
Universality	Everyone is included and can meet their needs	
Equity	Everyone contributes what they can and gets what they need	
Accountability	The people are able to oversee and guide how government is protecting and fulfilling our rights	
Transparency	All information related to decision-making should be clear and accessible to all	
Participation	Everyone has a meaningful say in how decisions get made that impact us all	

EAT-UP (equity, accountability, transparency, universality, participation)

TAPE-U (transparency, accountability, participation, equity, universality)

Current Campaigns

We use campaigns to both win concrete demands, but also to grow as a movement and shift the balance of power. Our current campaigns are focused on making changes at the state government level, but there may be other times where our campaigns focus on other power holders. The campaign descriptions below describe our primary campaigns in 2014-2015. If you would like more update to date info on specific legislation or campaigns, contact a field organizer, member of the Coordinating Committee or Steering Committee. Not sure who they are? Email info@workerscenter.org

Healthcare Is a Human Right

The Healthcare is a Human Right Campaign was launched in 2008 by the Vermont Workers' Center. We recognized that even with federal healthcare reform, there is a serious healthcare crisis in Vermont and across the country. Too many people are suffering and even dying because of our broken healthcare system.

From 2008-2011, VWC members organized all across the state, talking with neighbors, friends and family about the healthcare crisis and our vision for a universal healthcare system. Because of all this organizing, Vermont became the first state in the country to pass universal healthcare legislation with Act 48. Act 48 put Vermont on the course to establishing a universal healthcare system, but it did not decide how the system will be paid for or what will be included under Green Mountain Care. Between 2011 and 2015, there have been many change to the VT healthcare system because of the federal healthcare legislation (Affordable Care Act aka Obamacare). Because of this federal healthcare reform, the earliest that Vermont can establish our universal healthcare system will be in 2017.

Even with Governor Shumlin claiming it's "not possible", we will be working hard to make sure that VT stays on course with universal healthcare. We have a major fight ahead of us to pass healthcare financing legislation that will be equitable. That means that the majority of the burden will not fall on people who are already struggling, but that people will pay what they can and get what they need. Equity in financing also means that the super wealthy and big corporations will pay significantly more than the rest of us.

We will prioritize the struggle for truly equitable financing and a universal system that includes everyone. That means no discrimination based on immigration status, gender identity, ability or anything else. It also means a system that provides care (what we need medically, when we need it) not "benefits". We'll fight for our healthcare system to include oral health, vision, hearing, alternative care and long term care.

Current Campaigns (cont.)

Work with Dignity

The VWC started as an organization fighting for workers' rights, and has maintained this as a major part of our work ever since then. Our first project was the Vermont Workers Rights Hotline, with the goal to find workers who wanted to fight for their rights at work and potentially organize with their co-workers to fight for justice at work. We also have mobilized workers to push to raise workplace standards through legislative struggles (like raising minimum wage and paid sick days) and municipal ordinance fights (like Burlington livable wage ordinance).

Currently, our Work with Dignity Committee has 5 areas of work (1) Work with Dignity Solidarity (2) Burlington Workers Rights Enforcement Project (3) Workers' Rights Hotline (4) Paid Sick Days (5) Leadership Development.

Work with Dignity Solidarity

In Vermont, the majority of workers are not in unions. We believe it's important to build strong union and community relationships to fight for the right to organize in our workplaces and maintain hard won workers rights at workplaces. In addition, we need to organize to fight for workers rights in workplaces and industries where unions have not been able to gain a foothold. We need to awaken the social power that comes from the political practice of solidarity.

Just as there was a tremendous amount of solidarity around the CCTA strike in Burlington, and the Fairpoint strike, we anticipate that there will be continued union solidarity organizing across Vermont in the coming year. We will continue to grow union solidarity actions within VT labor movement by engaging in fights where we can work directly with emerging workplace union leaders. In addition, we'll support other state and national workers' rights campaigns like Migrant Justice's Milk With Dignity, Fastfood Workers Fight for \$15 and OUR Walmart.

Burlington Organizing Project

The Burlington Organizing Project is about building a worker driven, democratic organization in downtown Burlington that engages food service and retail workers in workplace issues. We will design a campaign strategy to engage workers in an arena where they can immediately exercise control and power. We believe that many of the issues that working people struggle with in our communities relate directly back to the fact that powerlessness at work is at the root of why housing, fuel, food and healthcare are such fundamental struggles. We can effectively change the balance of power in the workplace in a relatively short period of time, whereas changing the balance of power in our community is a long term project that requires us to engage people in

Current Campaigns (cont.)

experiencing power, developing leadership and making decisions that directly impact their quality of life.

Burlington Workers Rights Enforcement Project

The City of Burlington current has a livable wage ordinance, that requires city employees, contractors and subcontractors to make a livable wage. It was recently discovered that the city is only complying with this ordinance with 14% of its contractors. Because of the organizing of local Burlington OC members, the Vermont Workers' Center was awarded the contract as the new Designated Accountability Monitor for the City of Burlington in July 2014. As the Designated Accountability Monitor, we will work hard to enforce the livable wage ordinance.

Vermont Workers Rights Hotline

We started our Workers' Rights hotline in 1999. Our hope is to strengthen our ability to identify workplace issues that we can organize around, and to build a committee of people who are interested in working on work with dignity issues. For example, in July 2014 we did a direct action on a Burlington restaurant owner who was committing wage theft and successfully won more that \$700 in back wages.

Paid Sick Days

In 2013, we launched a Paid Sick Days campaign to try to pass state level legislation guaranteeing all workers a minimum paid sick days. After lots of organizing in the summer and fall of 2013, we were able to thrust it as a key issue in the legislative session. Despite having major support in the legislature, media and public, the bill ended up dying due to pressure from powerful industry groups and their targeted outreach to small businesses in key districts. Instead the Governor and legislative leaders decided to move forward with a bill to raise the minimum wage, ultimately to \$10.50/hour in 2018. The Earned Sick Day Coalition coordinated by the Voices For Vermont's Children intends to try to keep pushing for this to happen in 2015 or 2016 and we will continue to connect with people who are impacted by a lack of Paid Sick Days.

Leadership Development

With the resurgence in the VT labor movement and solidarity fights, in the coming year we will get back to working with VT Labor Solidarity (VLS), Labor Notes and union partners to provide leadership development opportunities and mentoring for emerging workplace leaders. We hope develop dozens of new workplace/union leaders and organizers across the state

Current Campaigns (cont.)

Growing Strong Campaign

At the 2012 Membership Assembly we decided together to embark on a process of upgrading our membership structure. Over the course of the 2013, we have engaged in many small and large group meetings to discuss how to structure our organization in a way that continues to strengthen our existing leadership while allowing us to grow and grow.

We formed a Membership & Structure committee to explore ways we can improve the functioning of our committees and as a member-run organization. We also kept coming back to the realization that to build the movement we need to build we must own it and raise money ourselves rather than be dependent on foundations and grants that limit our work. This has led us to propose a new initiative called the Growing Strong Campaign.

In our goal is to transition to this new membership structure and expand our grassroots fundraising so we can be strong and resilient enough to stick and stay for the long haul. We'll grow our capacity with clear definition of membership and member roles. We will recruit many new members. We will continue to grow stronger by deepening and strengthening our leadership through expanding political education and skill building programs. We'll increase member ownership of the organization as we transition to a more grassroots-powered, people-owned funding model with the implementation of a membership dues system. Finally, we will grow stronger and advance democracy in our organization by improving communication with each other and our communities and implementing clear decision-making and planning processes.

The Growing Strong Campaign is a major priority...it is the people who make the movement. To be the kind of organization that can truly transform our society, we need good systems to support each other, communicate, learn from each other and grow.

Put People First!

All of our campaign goals are woven together to advance the movement for people and the planet in Vermont. Too often people and groups work separately on specific issues that share common root causes such as systems of oppression, policies that put profits over people and a lack of participation in decision making. These problems also share root solutions like people taking collective action, policies based on human rights and real democracy.

In order achieve the world we want to live in, we must grow the human rights movement and unite the struggles of all people. In order to do that, this year we will

continue to stand in solidarity for the right to organize, for immigrant rights, disability rights and for a healthy environment and livable planet. We will use the People's Budget frame as a vehicle for linking policy struggles and overcoming divisions. We will continue to strengthen our relationships with organizational partners so we can grow one movement for people and the planet.

Fundraising and Budget

Membership Dues

As a member-led organization, membership dues help us build a strong organization, owned by the members, guided by our principles, and true to our mission. As our membership grows, the less dependent we are on the changing winds of foundations and the more self-directing we become. Dues help us stay accountable to our members, with members owning the organization — financially and with decision-making.

Basic Info and How To

Member dues are on a sliding scale and based on the principle of equity — meaning that as a member, you choose the dues amount that is right for you or your family. The minimum is \$1/month or \$12/year. On average, members choose \$15-\$25/month or \$180-\$300/year. No one will be turned away from membership by the inability to pay dues, and members can request a dues waiver.

There are two membership categories for dues:

- Sustaining Member: Sustaining members choose to spread their dues out over the course of the year, usually monthly or quarterly.
- Annual Member: Annual members prefer to pay their dues at one-time.

To pay dues, members can:

- Send a Check to: Vermont Workers' Center, 294 North Winooski Avenue, Burlington, VT 05401
- Sign up for Bank Draft: Fill out this form and mail to the VWC - <http://www.workerscenter.org/sites/default/files/directdepositform.pdf>
- Sign up Online via a Credit / Debit Card: <http://www.workerscenter.org/donate>

VWC Financial Statement - 2014 Income

REVENUES	TOTAL	Percentage
Monthly Sustainers & Annual Donors	\$82,328	9.64%
Major Donors	\$79,548	9.32%
Foundations	\$596,960	69.93%
Coalition Donations	\$20,606	2.41%
Staff Sponsorship	\$41,690	4.88%
Earned Income, Events & Merchandise	\$27,664	3.24%
Miscellaneous Income	\$4,873	.58%
TOTAL REVENUES	\$853,668	

VWC Financial Statement- 2014 Expenses

EXPENSES	TOTAL	Percentage
Personnel Salaries	\$532,515	62.66%
Fringe & FICA	\$127,497	15.00%
Insurance & Banking	\$19,964	2.35%
Professional Fees	\$38,966	4.59%
Sponsorships, Advertising & Permits	\$12,697	1.49%
Printing & Printing	\$19,313	2.27%
Rent, Utilities & Equipment	\$22,218	2.61%
Telecommunications	\$18,851	2.22%
Conference / Travel	\$42,971	5.06%
Program / Meeting Expenses & Supplies	\$14,853	1.75%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$849,846	

Major Annual Events

May 1st March & Rally

Since 2008, we have held a march & rally on May 1st in Montpelier, ending at the Statehouse. May 1st celebrates international workers' day, and also is usually around the end of our legislative session. This event draws hundreds from across the state.



Membership Assembly

Every November, all our members come together to reflect on the previous year, vote for our Coordinating Committee members, and vote on other major organizational decisions. We also will look ahead at the coming year. Everyone who is a current member is eligible to vote. The membership assembly is usually held in Central VT.

Tree of Oppression/Liberation

The metaphor of a tree is helpful for thinking about different ways of working on them. If you think about a tree, the leaves represent the immediate issues we face on a day to day basis: unaffordable tuition, no access to healthcare, racism in schools, homelessness, environmental destruction, etc. The trunk of the tree would be the institutions that support those leaves. Institutions are structures, organization, or ideas that are established and have credibility and power. A lot of times they are the instruments that carry out the problematic ideas that leads to the leaves, for example: policies that take away from workers' rights, hospitals and companies that are set up to make money and not provide healthcare, schools that are not set up to meet everyone's needs, or police that make many people less safe. The roots of the tree are the root systems or ideologies that



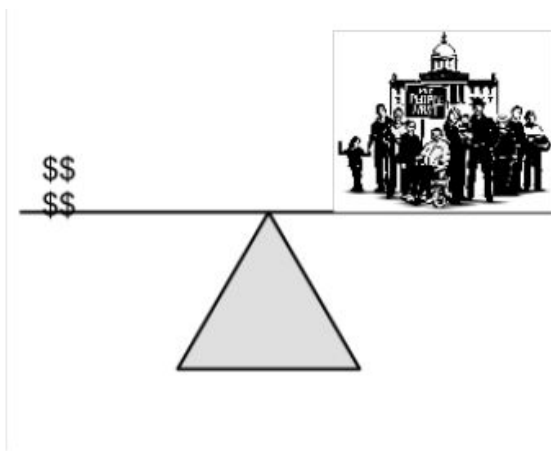
underlie those institutions and lead to the leaves that we experience in our lives. Some examples of roots are capitalism and an economic system that prioritizes profits, racism, patriarchy or sexism, and exploitation of people and the environment.

What we see happening in our communities is that a lot of time and resources is spent on trying to manage the roots of the trees. How do we deal with homelessness? We build homeless shelters. How do we deal with unaffordable tuition? We create scholarships. While these approaches are important in the immediate term because we need to address the leaves, the problems keep growing back until we do something to get deeper at the roots. When we focus on just the leaves (say, if we provide hundreds of free health clinics to increase access to healthcare), the underlying problem doesn't go away of people's health being treated like a market good instead of a human right. At the VWC we try to do "root work" so that we are fighting for more than just "trimming the leaves" of the tree, but really changing the root ideas that our institutions are based on. We do this by using principles and a human rights framework in our campaign, by fighting for participation and accountability rather than just different outcomes, and by doing deep leadership development and political education so that together we can figure out what the new roots and trunk of our "Tree of Liberation" will look like.

Teeter Totter

We see how so many of us are struggling to meet our needs- whether that's housing, work with dignity, healthcare, education, etc. We often feel frustrated, or sometimes we blame ourselves or each other for these problems. But who actually makes decisions about these challenges that we face? Let's look at healthcare as one example- who currently has the power to make decisions about our healthcare system? Do you feel like you have a say in that system? Usually when we ask most people that question the answer is no. Most people say insurance companies, drug companies, their lobbyists have the power to make decisions about our healthcare system.

We like to think about this as a teeter totter. On one side there are the people with the money and the power to currently make decisions about our lives. On the other side is us- and there are a whole lot of us. We are mad and frustrated, and are often jumping up and down individually because of our frustration. We aren't able to tip the teeter totter though, because we are acting alone.



What happens when we ORGANIZE!

What we need to do is learn to jump together so we can tip the teeter totter so we can AT LEAST have as much say as the big money interests (like the insurance companies and lobbyists in the example of healthcare). Jumping together is another way of describing organizing. It can look all kinds of waysdays of action at the Statehouse, going door to door to organize in your community, organizing local events, developing strong leadership, etc. This is our task- to learn to jump together to shift the balance of power!

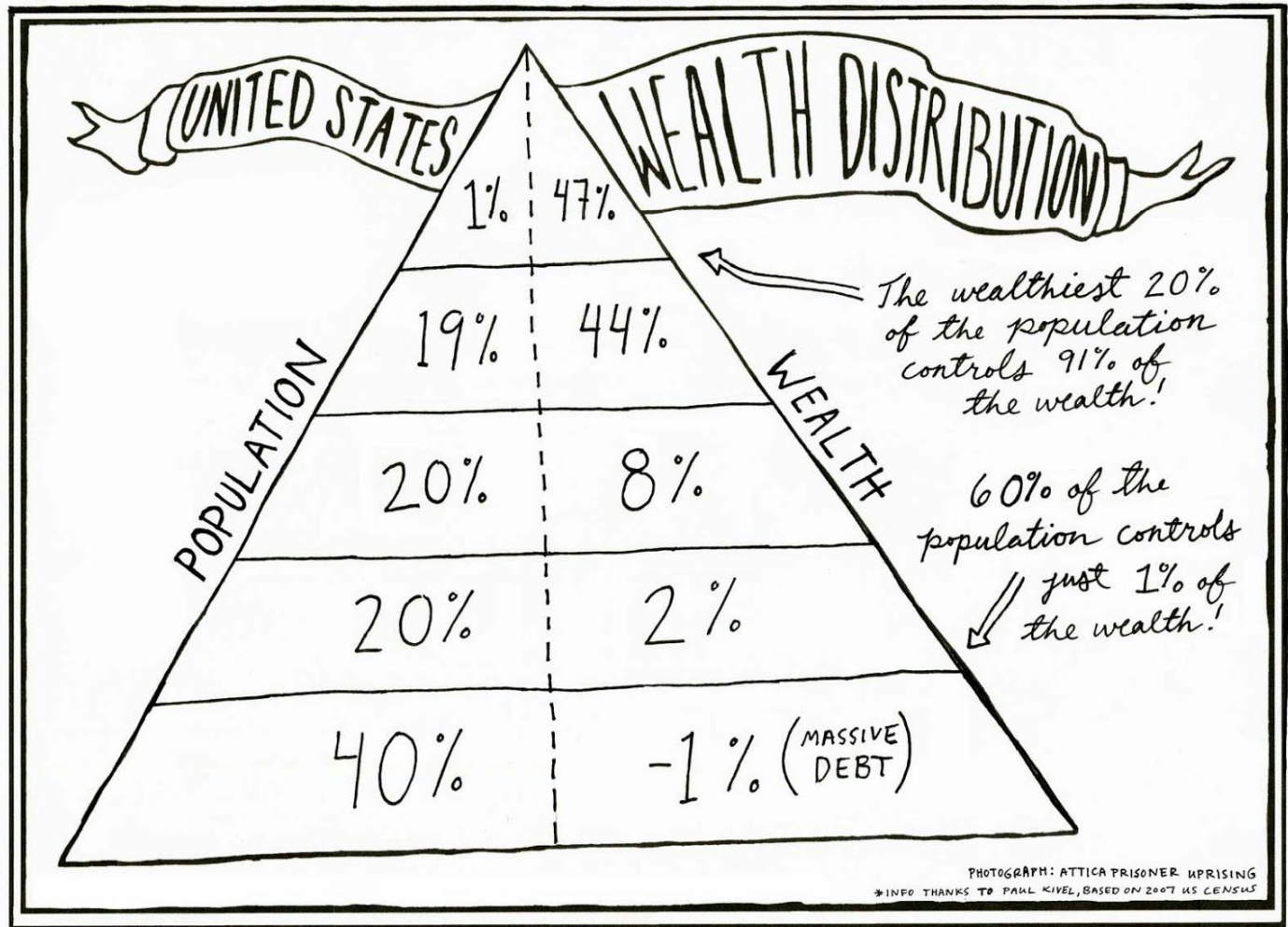
“Power grows from organization...Freedom is never given. It must be taken. And therefore, we only get what we are organized to take.”

-National Union of the Homeless

Economic Pyramid

Over the past decades, we've seen a dramatic concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer people. This chart from 2007 shows that 1% of the population controlled 47% of the US's wealth, while the bottom 40% of the population actually had NEGATIVE wealth (because of debt). Since the 2008 economic crisis, this inequality has only grown. We feel that understanding this distribution is critical for all the issues we face. Often we are told that there isn't enough, and that we all must “tighten our belts” by

accepting cuts to vital public goods or services (that often weren't enough to meet our needs from the beginning). When we look at this chart we see that there is enough to meet all our needs, it's just that it's concentrated in the hands of a very small few people.



“And if we have to march, that’s important that we march. It is important that we protest. But we also have to organize because the only way that we can change is through organizing.” - Dolores Huerta

Contact Info for Coordinating Committee (CoCo) & Staff 2015

Every November at our Membership Assembly we hold elections for open Coordinating Committee (CoCo) seats. The Coordinating Committee is the Board of Directors for the VWC. Our staff positions may change as staff members transition into different roles, or our staff expands or contracts based on our current work. An up to date list of both

CoCo and staff can be found at
<http://www.workerscenter.org/about-vermont-workers-center/staff-and-leaders>

Coordinating Committee 2015

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<p>Workers' Rights Monitor 802-881-4703 devon@workerscenter.org</p> <p>Heather Pipino Development Director (802) 595-1671 heather@workerscenter.org</p> <p>Hollis Dale Office & Admin Coordinator (404) 216-2819 hollis@workerscenter.org</p> <p>James Haslam Executive Director (802) 272-0882 james@workerscenter.org</p> <p>Keith Brunner Communications Organizer (802) 363-9615 darya@workerscenter.org</p>	<p>Healthcare Campaign Coordinator (802) 373-0133 matt@workerscenter.org</p> <p>Megan Sheehan Director of Operations & Membership (802) 505-9315 megan@workerscenter.org</p> <p>Shela Linton Southern VT Field Organizer (802) 275-2363 shela@workerscenter.org</p> <p>Liz Beatty-Owens Northern VT Field Organizer (802) 498-8682 liz@workerscenter.org</p>
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<p>VWC Burlington Office 294 N. Winooski Ave Burlington, VT 05041 Phone: 802-861-4892</p>	<p>VWC Brattleboro Office-The Root Social Justice Center 28 Williams St., First Floor Brattleboro, VT 05301 Phone: 802-254-3400</p>	<p>VWC Workers' Rights Hotline Call toll-free: 866-229-0009 In Chittenden County: 802-861-2877</p>
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VWC Organizational Partners

<p>Human Rights Council Founding Orgs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 350 Vermont • Green Mountain Self-Advocates (GMSA) 	<p>National/International Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Border Network for Human Rights (TX) • Caring Across Generations • Catalyst Project
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- Migrant Justice
- Rising Tide Vermont
- United Professions of Vermont/AFT
- Vermont Center For Independent Living (VCIL)
- Vermont Early Educators United/AFT
- Vermont Federation of Nurses & Health Professionals AFT
- Voices For Vermont's Children

Other Vermont Partners

- United Electrical Workers
- Vermont AFL-CIO
- VSEA
- The Root Social Justice Center
- AFSCME/Vermont Homecare United

Other Healthcare is a Human Right Campaigns

- Healthcare is a Human Right Maryland
- Healthcare is a Human Right Maine
- Healthcare is a Human Right Pennsylvania

- Center for Story-Based Strategy (previously Smartmeme)
- Center for Popular Democracy
- Grassroots Global Justice (GGJ)
- Human Rights at Home Campaign (HuRAH)
- Jobs With Justice (JwJ)
- Labor Campaign for Single Payer
- Media Action Grassroots Network (MAG-Net)
- Media Mobilizing Project - MMP (PA)
- National Economic & Social Rights Initiative (NESRI)
- Poverty Initiative
- Put People First! PA (PA)
- Southern Maine Workers' Center (ME)
- United Workers (MD)
- US Labor Against the War
- US Human Rights Network
- Malcolm X Center for Self Determination
- The United Workers' Congress
- American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
- Friends of the MST

“If you give me a fish, you have fed me for a day. If you teach me to fish, then you have fed me until the river is contaminated or the shoreline seized for development. But if you teach me how to organize, then whatever the challenge I can join together with my peers and we will fashion our own solution.”-Ricardo Levins Morales

Five Critical Lessons from Vermont's Universal Healthcare Struggle

By James Haslam, Director, Vermont Workers' Center. Published September 2011.

[Note: This was written to share at our Summer Leadership Retreat and with our peers around the country. It has been a true honor to work with so many amazing and committed people. There were countless lessons learned in the past three years, these are five we wanted to lift up as valuable for our road ahead

building a movement with our counterparts everywhere. They were earned by the tireless work of hundreds of people.]

On May 1, 2011 over two thousand people took part in a Healthcare Is A Human Right march and rally in Vermont's state capitol, Montpelier. They were demanding the final passage of ground-breaking legislation that set Vermont on course to become the first state in the country with a universal healthcare system. We will never forget that only three years before, when the Vermont Workers' Center launched the Healthcare Is A Human Right Campaign, we were told by almost everyone that this couldn't happen. A few weeks after the rally, while we watched Vermont's Governor Peter Shumlin sign "Act 48: Relating to a Universal and Unified Health System" into law we were struck by how far we had come in just a few years. Yet even as our dream is beginning to take shape in reality, we also realize how many more battles still lie ahead of us. With many deep-pocketed and well-connected foes plotting to defeat our people's movement, we must scale up our grassroots organizing to build a broader movement for social and economic rights, involving even more people and allies, so that we're ready to take back our democracy.

As our grassroots leaders and organizers reflected on our experience of three years of intense human rights- based organizing, we identified five hard-earned lessons that may also be valuable to our counterparts around the country. We are very aware that our ultimate success depends on Vermont shedding its role as a unique and exceptional case and instead becoming a catalyst for victorious struggles elsewhere. Just as the uprisings in Wisconsin have redefined what defensive struggles look like in order to ignite similar efforts around the country, so can Vermont's example show how to build a proactive people's movement that can change the political landscape in this country.

1: People's movements can redefine political priorities. For decades, advocates have made a strong case for universal, single-payer healthcare. Founded in 1998 to fight for workers' rights, the Vermont Workers' Center supported many of these efforts. Unfortunately, past legislative initiatives often fell victim to political expediency as politicians declared themselves single payer advocates on the campaign trail but abandoned the platform once in office, pursuing what they saw as "politically possible" instead of championing what would actually meet people's needs. This is why in 2008, we launched a campaign to change what was politically possible. Through grassroots human rights organizing, we set out to demonstrate to every legislator that the majority of their constituents supported equal high quality healthcare for everyone. We showed ambitious politicians that championing healthcare reform was in their interest--and that ignoring the Vermonters who elected them would be politically costly. Ultimately, our grassroots movement - led by the people most affected by the crisis - redefined political priorities in Vermont and made true healthcare reform possible.

2. Using a Human Rights Framework can be extremely effective for both organizing work and policy fights. When we started the campaign many healthcare activists and political pundits questioned whether the idea “healthcare is a human right” would resonate with “middle Vermont” and rural communities. There was also skepticism whether the values-based human rights approach would translate into an effective policy framework. But the failure of singlepayer arguments to receive a hearing in the national health reform debate, along with the debacle of Obama’s “Public Option,” demonstrated the pitfalls of relying primarily on a cost-efficiency narrative. In contrast, the human rights framework puts people at the center of policy and practice, thus shifting the discourse from costs to needs, from figures to values. Using human rights, we were able to engage Vermonters from all walks of life and focus the debate on real people, their healthcare needs and struggles, and our values as a community and country. The response to this people-centered framework has been overwhelmingly favorable.

To guide policy discussions and assess legislative proposals, the campaign has deployed five human rights principles: universality, equity, accountability, transparency and participation. These were expanded into an analytical policy framework whose key elements were so persuasive that they made it into the statutory language of Act 48. As we head down the road to a universal healthcare system, we will be able to use this framework to measure implementation proposals against human rights standards and develop policy alternatives.

The Healthcare is a Human Right Campaign has shown that the fight for the right to healthcare can unite communities long divided on other issues (more on this in #3 below). In using the human rights framework we set the stage for building a broader movement for all economic and social rights. We believe such a people’s movement is necessary to win the kind of democracy required to provide healthcare - and other services that fulfill fundamental needs - as a public good, shared equitably by all.



3. Be prepared to counter divide and rule tactics. Education with our members is a huge part of using the human rights framework. In the early months of the campaign, the Vermont Workers’ Center, in collaboration with the Bay Area-based Catalyst Project, held a series of anti-racism workshops for 170 of our members and supporters all over the state. Included in these day-long trainings was an organizing role play exercise about the divisive issue of covering undocumented workers in our universal healthcare system. The take home message was that according to human rights principles our campaign would be committed to a truly universal system in which everyone is included regardless of immigration status. Since then, the Workers’

Center has greatly expanded our commitment to leadership development, and hundreds of members and supporters participate in organizing and political education workshops like this one each year.

As expected, our workshop scenario eventually unfolded on the very real stage of the 2011 Statehouse floor. After the healthcare reform bill had already passed the House and Senate healthcare committees, a last minute amendment for excluding undocumented workers from the healthcare system was introduced in the full Senate and passed with a large, bi-partisan majority. Fortunately, through our past anti-racism and organizing trainings and our emphasis on the human rights principle of universality, our campaign leaders were crystal clear on this issue: when we say universal, we mean everyone!

Despite being told by Senate leaders that there was no chance for removing this divide and rule amendment, we immediately got to work demonstrating to the legislature and the governor that the people of Vermont would only accept a truly universal and inclusive bill. On May 1st, days before the final bill was passed, 2000 Vermonters converged on the Statehouse for our annual May Day rally, signed petitions against the exclusionary amendment, listened to speeches from undocumented farm workers, and chanted the message that “Universal Means Everyone, Everywhere.” As a direct result of this groundswell of Vermonters unified in their commitment to human rights and healthcare for all, by May 3rd the Senate reversed course and struck the amendment.

4. It's not just about having convincing arguments, it's about getting our communities organized to demand justice. It certainly can be useful to have facts and statistics to back up what we are fighting for, but ultimately what matters most is having the people power to convince decision makers to act on the will of their constituents. For years, advocates demonstrated that single-payer financing could cover everyone and still save money. Yet cost-effectiveness was not enough to drive legislative action; we had to put pressure on our elected officials with an active statewide, grassroots network that created the political space for action. We built this with a mass grassroots organizing campaign that involved thousands of people throughout the state. We now have organizing committees in every region whose members mobilize their neighbors to make calls, send letters and come to rallies and events. Everyday we are holding our legislators accountable to ensure that they serve the needs and priorities of Vermont's communities.

5. We need to tell our own stories. Many, if not all, people's movements have learned this lesson. Politicians and most media outlets will go out of their way to overshadow the role of a people's movement in fighting for and securing positive social change. Throughout the coverage of Vermont's universal healthcare breakthrough, the



media has focused on a handful of politicians, policy experts, and doctors while largely ignoring the people's movement that drove the reform effort. The opinions of individual elected leaders or prominent community members were highlighted while the collective voice and unified action of thousands of Vermonters went unmentioned.

Unfortunately, the mainstream media-- beholden to the advertising revenue of corporate interests-- routinely marginalizes people who come together to demand basic rights and justice in their communities. It's always easier and politically safer to credit elected officials and a select few individual "heroes" for the hard work of thousands of organized community members. This serves to contain and potentially neutralize the policy wins we've made, and to lull community members into passivity - someone else will be taking action for us.

Since we cannot depend on the mainstream media to cover our mobilizing efforts, values, needs, and demands, we have learned that we must tell our own stories. We tell our own people's history of how human rights were won for future generations. We tell this history so that people understand that without their own action, change will not happen. There is no hero that will come and save us.

The challenge ahead: We realize that the success of our struggle is tied up with that of other struggles across the country in this historical moment. It will not work if Vermont merely seeks to become an exception. Our opponents will not tolerate the development of dangerous examples, such as providing universal healthcare as a public good. Public policy around healthcare and our other basic economic and social rights is not about meeting people's fundamental needs and fulfilling human rights obligations, but instead driven primarily by market imperatives which create and deepen systemic inequities. Those that profit enormously from the current system may be small in number, yet also extremely deep-pocketed and influential. To overcome this difference in power we have to get the many of us organized into a powerful people's force triumphing the basic moral values our communities share - taking care for one another and having everyone be able to a dignified life. We have learned that to do this we need to develop a large group of committed leaders and organizers who are as united and sophisticated as our opponents.

Song Lyrics

We use song and music often in our gatherings and events. Here are the lyrics to a few songs we commonly sing.

People's House (after the first round with using "People's House" can substitute that phrase with other things- ex: governor's house, lobbyist's house, etc.)

All the People Need

Leader: All the people need health and dignity
All: repeat

<p>Well I went down to the People's House, and I took back what they stole from me. I took back, took back my <u>dignity</u> I took back, took back my <u>humanity</u></p> <p>(chorus) And now it's under my feet (where) under my feet (where) under my feet (where) under my feet Ain't no system gonna walk all over me.</p> <p>Well I went down to the People's House, and I took back what was stolen from me. I took back, took back my <u>dignity</u> I took back, took back my <u>democracy</u></p> <p>(chorus) And now it's under my feet (where) under my feet (where) under my feet (where) under my feet Ain't no system gonna walk all over me.</p>	<p>All: We fight for human rights so we all can be free</p> <p>Leader: All the people need work with dignity All: repeat All: ALL TOGETHER NOW IN SOLIDARITY!!</p> <p>All the people need, all the people need, all the people health and dignity. All together now in solidarity 3x</p> <p>We Shall Not Give Up the Fight We shall not give up the fight We have only started, we have only started, we have only started (Twice through)</p> <p>Together we'll have victory Hand holding hand, hand holding hand, hand holding hand (Twice through)</p> <p>Never ever put to flight, We are bound to win, we are bound to win, we are bound to win (Twice through)</p> <p>We shall not give up the fight We have only started, we have only started, we have only started (Twice through)</p>
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Agreements

We often use agreements in our meeting so that we can create a space that everyone feels comfortable and best able to learn and share. Below are some common agreements we've used in the past, but often groups will add to this list or tailor to their needs.

- Step Up/Step Back – for people who often don't contribute, this is a good time to "step up" and participate. For people who feel comfortable talking, this is a good place to "step back" and allow others to have some space to be heard.
- Be Aware of Time – we have a lot on the agenda and want to be respectful of people's time by ending on time.
- Oppression Exists – the existence of racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism etc. is not debatable, and we make an agreement with each other to be conscious of their functioning and to confront oppressive behavior.
- Use the "Ouch" – If something is sensitive, please use the "ouch" to interrupt (the person using the "ouch" is not obligated to explain the issue)
- Use the "Whoa" – If you hear something you don't understand, use the "whoa" to interrupt to get an explanation.
- We All Have Knowledge/We All Have Ignorance – this is a space where we come to learn from each other.
- Cell Phones Off? – generally preferred to ask everyone to turn cell phones off, but if there are people who have kids or other dependents who might need to get ahold of them (or other good reasons to keep a cell phone on), then we ask those people to turn phones to vibrate. Ask everyone to agree to only take critically important calls, everyone else turns phones off, etc.
- Hard doesn't necessarily mean bad- Sometimes we need to confront issues, feel challenged by not being sure what to do in a situation, or have disagreements. Just because something is hard doesn't mean it is bad, and can be really important for us to work through. Of course that also means that people still treat each other with respect and care.
- Unity-Struggle-Unity- There are times that we might disagree or struggle with seeing things in the same way, but we recognize that we are all here because we believe in a common vision of a better world. Our hope is to be ok with the moments of struggle, and to be able to come back to a place of unity.

Vermont Workers' Center By-Laws

What are by-laws? By-laws are the official rules that govern the VWC. Any changes to the bylaws are made at our annual Membership Assembly in November.

ARTICLE I OFFICES

Section 1. Registered Office. The Vermont Workers Center shall at all times maintain an office in the State of Vermont, and a registered agent, whose business office shall

be the registered office of the Vermont Workers Center, located at 294 N. Winooski Ave., Burlington VT 05401.

Section 2. Other Offices. The Vermont Workers Center may also have such other offices within or without the State of Vermont as the Coordinating Committee may, from time to time, designate, and as the business and affairs of the Vermont Workers Center may require.

ARTICLE II PURPOSES

Section 1. Nature of Corporation. The Vermont Workers Center is a nonprofit educational corporation, which is organized and shall be operated in accordance with the meaning and provisions of Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and the regulations issued thereunder.

Section 2. Primary Purposes. The Vermont Workers Center is organized for the non-partisan purposes set forth in its Articles of Incorporation which are filed with the State of Vermont.

ARTICLE III BOARD OF DIRECTORS-COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Section 1. General Powers. The Board of Directors shall be named the Coordinating Committee, and may generally be called CoCo. The CoCo shall have the general power to manage and control the affairs and property of the Vermont Workers Center, and shall have full power, to adopt rules and regulations governing the action of the Coordinating Committee.

Section 2. Number, Election, and Term of Office. The Coordinating Committee shall consist of no less than five (5), and no more than twelve (12), members. The Coordinating Committee shall hereafter be referred to as the CoCo, and members of the CoCo must be residents of, or employed within, the State of Vermont. At least five (5) of the members of the CoCo shall be at large members, and the remaining members shall be representatives of one or more campaigns of the VWC. No more than one member of another organization may be elected to the CoCo.

Section 2A. Election and Term of Office. Except in the case of filling vacancies, Election to the CoCo shall be by formal consensus, or, if not achieved, by a majority vote of the members of the organization present at the Annual Meeting. Each CoCo member shall hold office for a term of two (2) years and thereafter until her/his successor is elected and qualified. Vacancies occurring between annual meetings may be filled by majority vote of the then-sitting members of the CoCo. A member so elected to fill a vacancy shall hold office for the unexpired term of his/her predecessor in office.

Section 3. Removal of COCO Membership. CoCo membership may be recalled for cause. The recall process may be initiated by either: (1) a majority vote of the CoCo; or (2) a petition of no less than 20 members to hold a Special Meeting of the membership for the purpose of establishing cause. The CoCo member may be removed upon a vote of at least two thirds of members present at such a meeting.

Section 4. Regular Meetings. The CoCo shall hold meetings, at least quarterly, at such time, format or media, and place as the CoCo prescribe by majority vote.

Section 5. Special Meetings. Special Meetings of the CoCo may be called by or at the request of the President or any two CoCo members. The person or persons authorized to call Special Meetings of the CoCo may fix any reasonable date, hour, and place, within the State of Vermont, by teleconference, video conference or in person, for that Special Meeting.

Section 6. Notice. Notice of any Special Meeting of the CoCo shall be given at least five (5) days prior to that meeting date by written notice delivered personally or sent by mail, email, facsimile or other means of electronic transmission to each CoCo member at the address as shown in the records of the VWC. If mailed, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered when deposited in the United States mail in a sealed envelope so addressed, with postage prepaid. Any CoCo member may waive notice of any meeting. The attendance of a member at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a member attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. The business to be transacted at, and the purpose of, any such meeting must not be specified in the notice or waiver of notice of such meeting.

Section 7. Quorum and Proxies. A majority of the total number of CoCo members then in office shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the CoCo; but, if less than a majority of the CoCo members are present at said meeting, a majority of the members present may adjourn the meeting, and notice a new time and date for such meeting. Proxies shall not be permitted.

Section 8. Manner of Acting. The preferred manner of acting shall be by formal consensus in the manner described in the attached Exhibit A. In the event that consensus is not reached, actions must be approved by a vote of the majority of members present, and at a meeting at which a quorum is present. This manner of acting applies to informal email votes taken on issues between meetings.

Section 9. Compensation. Members of the CoCo shall not receive any monetary compensation for holding that position.

Section 10. Informal Action. Any authorized CoCo action may be taken without a meeting of the CoCo if that action shall be approved by a majority of the CoCo, acknowledged in writing setting forth the action so taken, and signed by each CoCo member consenting to that action.

Email votes may be taken on issues that are time sensitive. Any issues to be so decided shall be sent by email to CoCo members. Each member shall have 48 hours to respond, via email, with their vote or concern. Upon the expiration of 48 hours from the time the email request was sent, unless the time is otherwise extended by majority vote and provided a quorum has responded, a decision shall be made in accordance with Section 8 of these Bylaws, and shall be recorded by the Secretary in the records of the corporation.

Section 11. Resignation. A member may resign from the CoCo at any time by giving notice of her/ his resignation in writing addressed to the President of the VWC or by presenting a resignation at an annual membership meeting or a meeting of the CoCo.

ARTICLE IV REGULAR COMMITTEES

Section 1. Purposes. The CoCo may establish such committees to assist VWC in the performance of its work as it considers appropriate.

Section 2. Rules. Each committee may adopt rules for its own government not inconsistent with the Bylaws or with rules adopted by the CoCo.

Section 3. Diversity. Each committee should strive to attain a diversity of membership not only geographically, but also as to gender, differently abled persons, ethnicity and other characteristics.

Section 4. Powers of Committees. Each committee formed shall have the power to recommend action to the CoCo as a whole, and to conduct business in the manner prescribed by the CoCo and noted in the records by resolution of the CoCo.

Section 5. Standing Committees. The Standing Committees shall be: Finance Committee, Personnel committee, Fundraising/Development Committee, Food Committee, Media committee and the Technology Committee. The Vice President shall chair the Personnel Committee and the Treasurer shall chair the Finance Committee.

ARTICLE V OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers. The Officers of the CoCo, which are the Officers of the Vermont Workers Center, shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and such other Officers as may be elected in accordance with the provisions of this Article. Not more than one office may be held simultaneously by the same person.

Section 2. Number of Persons Holding Each Office. Any office may be shared by two persons, upon their consent and election by the membership as provided for the election of officers herein.

Section 3. Election and Term of Office. The Officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the members at the annual meeting. Each Officer shall hold office for a term of two (2) years and thereafter until her/his successor shall have been duly elected and qualified.

Section 4. Vacancies. A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification or otherwise, may be filled by the CoCo for the unexpired portion of the term.

Section 5. President. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Vermont Workers Center and, in general, shall supervise and control all of the business and affairs of the organization. She/ He may sign, with the Secretary or any other proper Officer or designee of the Vermont workers Center authorized by the CoCo, any grants contracts, or other instruments or documents which the CoCo has authorized to be executed; and shall perform all such other duties as may be prescribed by the CoCo from time to time, including acting as the public face of the organization. In the event of the death, resignation or incapacity of the President, the Vice President shall function in this capacity until a successor is elected by the CoCo.

Section 6. Vice President. The Vice President shall coordinate outreach to new coalition organization members, serve as a liaison to other organizations and to legislators, and shall assist in any of the functions of the President outlined in section 5 above, as requested by the President. The Vice President shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the CoCo from time to time. The Vice President shall chair the Personnel Committee.

Section 7. Secretary. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the CoCo and be the custodian of all other corporate documents, which shall be kept at the corporate offices. If a corporate seal is obtained or required, the Secretary shall be the custodian of that Seal. The Secretary shall be responsible for any or all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of the Bylaws or as required by law; and perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him/her by the President or by the CoCo.

Section 8. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be responsible for all funds and securities of the Vermont Workers Center; receive and give receipts for monies due and payable to the Vermont Worker Center and deposit all such monies in the name of the Vermont Workers Center in such banks, trust companies or other depositories as shall be selected in accordance with the provisions of the Bylaws. The Treasurer may delegate

staff or consultants to perform such actions, but shall be responsible for those actions and to reporting to the CoCo. The Treasurer may perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to her/ him by the President or by the CoCo, including providing monthly financial reports. The Treasurer shall Chair the Finance Committee.

ARTICLE VI CONTRACTS, CHECKS, DEPOSITS AND FUNDS

Section 1. Contracts. The CoCo may authorize any Officer or Officers, agent or agents of the Vermont Workers Center, in addition to or in place of the Officers so authorized by the Bylaws, to enter into a contract or execute and deliver any instrument or document in the name and on behalf of the Vermont Workers Center. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances, and must be granted by formal Resolution of the CoCo specifying the parameters of that authority.

Section 2. Checks, Drafts, and Similar Documents. All checks, drafts or orders for the payment of money, notes or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of the Vermont Workers Center, shall be signed by such Officer or Officers and/or agent or agents of the Vermont Workers Center and in such manner as shall from time to time be determined by consensus of the CoCo. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances, and must be granted by formal Resolution of the CoCo specifying the parameters of that authority.

Section 3. Deposits. All funds of the Vermont Workers Center shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Vermont Workers Center in such banks, trust companies or other depositories as the CoCo may select.

Section 4. Gifts and Contributions. The CoCo may accept on behalf of the Vermont Workers Center any contribution, gift, bequest, or devise for the general purposes or for any special purpose of the Vermont Workers Center. Such contributions, gifts, bequests, or devises shall be in conformity with the laws of the United States, the State of Vermont, and any other relevant jurisdiction.

ARTICLE VII BOOKS AND RECORDS

The Vermont Workers Center shall keep correct and complete books and records of account of the type and in the manner common to organizations of its kind. It also shall keep minutes of the proceedings of its CoCo and all committees having been delegated any of the authority of the CoCo.

The fiscal year of Vermont Workers Center shall be the calendar year, commencing on the first day of January and ending on the last day of December in each year.

ARTICLE IX WAIVER OF NOTICE

Whenever any notice is required to be given under the provisions of the law of Vermont or under the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation or the Bylaws of the Vermont

Workers Center, a waiver thereof in writing signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice.

ARTICLE X AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

The Bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed and new Bylaws may be adopted by majority vote of the members present at any annual meeting, if at least fifteen (15) days written notice is given of intention to alter, amend or repeal the Bylaws or to adopt new Bylaws at such meeting.

ARTICLE XI MISSION OF THE VERMONT WORKERS CENTER

Section 1. The Vermont Workers' Center is a democratic, member-run organization dedicated to organizing for the human rights of the people of Vermont. We seek an economically just and democratic Vermont in which all residents' can meet their human needs and enjoy their human rights, including dignified work, universal healthcare, housing, education, childcare, transportation and a healthy environment. We work to build a democratic, diverse movement of people affected by injustice that is locally focused, coordinated statewide, and connected nationally. We work with organized labor to strengthen workers' rights, and with other allied organizations in support of other human rights. We are committed to taking action on the full range of issues of concern to people most impacted by economic and social injustice, and to building strategic alliances nationally and internationally.

Section 2. Our strategic orientation: We must grow a large and committed base to engage in collective struggle and build our power. We must act together to hold those in power accountable for ensuring our rights. We must make a leader of each of us and educate ourselves well in both history and strategy. We must use a consistent human rights framework to facilitate our organizing, develop our campaigns and formulate our policy positions. We must tell our own stories to counter the influence of mainstream media controlled by those in power. We must seek to fund our movement from our base, so that we are accountable only to our members. We must foster solidarity and build a broader movement by joining with other groups seeking economic and social justice. We believe that the most effective means of change is people engaging in collective struggle to place direct demands upon those who hold power.

Section 1. Categories of Membership. Membership shall be open to all regardless of union affiliation, gender, race, profession, disability, political beliefs, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or nationality. Membership categories may be defined or designated from time to time, if approved by CoCo between annual meetings, and ratified or approved by a majority at the Annual Meeting, provided, however, that all categories of members be allowed to vote at the annual meeting.

Section 2. Criteria for Membership. Membership shall be open to any individual who or organization which:

- Agrees with the Workers Center mission and strategic orientation as stated above; and
- Provides material support to the Workers Center, through either regular volunteer work or regular (annual or monthly) financial contribution; and
- Subscribes to the Vermont Workers Center solidarity action pledge as stated in these Bylaws.

Section 3A. Annual Meeting. Each member shall be entitled to vote on matters brought before that meeting. There shall be an annual meeting of the membership at which all membership business as described in these By Laws shall be transacted. The Annual Meeting shall occur on the second Saturday of November, unless otherwise noticed, at a time and place decided upon by the CoCo.

Vermont Workers' Center Action Pledge:

During the coming year, I pledge to be there at least five times to:

- Stand in solidarity with workers seeking to organize and bargain collectively for a job with justice, a living wage, a fair contract and a voice at work;
- Join with my neighbors and other members of my community to grow a grassroots movement with which, together, we can successfully demand public policy that serves the needs of all people including a dignified standard of living, a safe and healthful environment, the best quality healthcare, childcare, housing, education and transportation;
- Defend the needs of people against the exploitation, by corporations and others in power, of workers, communities and the environment;
- Work to recognize and put an end to all forms of social injustice, including oppression based on race, gender, disability and class.

Section 4. Membership Records. The Vermont Workers Center shall maintain a current listing of all individuals and organizations who are its members, together with addresses and contact information as supplied to the organization at the time that the member joins.

Section 5. Notice of Meetings. Notice of the Annual Meeting, together with an agenda of the business to be conducted at that meeting shall be sent to members by email or other mail, no less than fifteen days prior to the scheduled meeting.

Section 6. Voting. Each member, whether an organization or an individual shall cast one vote on any business transacted at the Annual Meeting or any Special Meeting.

Section 7. Staff Members. Staff is not considered members for purposes of voting at the annual meeting.

ARTICLE XIII REVOCATION OR SUSPENSION OF MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Causes for Revocation of Suspension of Membership. Membership of any individual or organization may be revoked or suspended for cause only if that member has been demonstrated to have actively opposed the mission or activities of the Vermont Workers Center.

Section 2. Method of Suspension or Revocation of Membership. Revocation or suspension of membership may be accomplished only at a duly noticed special or annual meeting of the membership, by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members attending that duly noticed meeting.

Section 3. Petition for Suspension or Revocation. Any twenty (20) members may petition for such action. The petition shall specifically name the person whose membership is challenged and detail the grounds for revocation or suspension. The petition shall be presented to at least one COCO member who will bring the matter to the COCO as a whole within ten (10) days of receipt of that petition. A Special meeting will be scheduled for the purpose of determining whether there exists reason for suspension or revocation. A copy of the petition shall be forwarded to the challenged member at least two (2) weeks prior to the noticed meeting date and the member so challenged shall be given an opportunity to respond either in writing or at the meeting, or both, to the allegations of cause.

Section 4. Reinstatement of Membership. The membership of any individual or Organization, once revoked, may not be reinstated for a minimum of one year from the date of the vote to revoke. A petition to reinstate membership must be signed by ten (10) members of the Vermont Workers Center. Reinstatement shall be only by a two-thirds majority vote of those members present at a duly noticed Membership Meeting.

ARTICLE XIV STAFF

Section 1. Livable Wage. Workers Center staff shall be compensated at least a livable wage and provided with fully paid health benefits.

Section 2. No At Will Employment. Vermont Workers Center staff are not employees at will. No employee may be terminated without a finding of just cause prior to which the employee shall have had an opportunity to explain and/or refute the claim of just cause.

Section 3. Staff Participation in Annual Membership Meeting. Staff shall have the right of participation in all Membership Meetings, but shall not have a vote at such meetings

Section 4. Card Check. The VWC shall commit to participating in voluntary card check recognition.

ARTICLE XV CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Section 1. Nature of Conflicts. Any actions or decisions in which a member has, or may be perceived as having cause, for bias, favoritism, prejudice or personal gain shall be deemed to raise a conflict of interest. All conflicts of interest must be disclosed by the member to the general membership and requires abstention from voting at Member Meetings as to any action or decision which is or may be affected by the conflict. All members of COCO and Staff must sign a Conflict of Interest statement acknowledging their receipt and understanding of that statement, as well as a Whistleblower Statement according to the form approved by the COCO, which shall be retained in the corporate records of the organization.

Section 2. Personal Gain. No member or staff may use confidential information not otherwise available to the public in order to enhance her/his financial position, nor accept any gifts of value related to the way in which s/he performs her/his obligations to the Vermont Workers Center.



Member Notes Section



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