

We Rise!



Final Projects
Class of 2025



MISSION



THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH (NATIONAL COSH) and the **COSH NETWORK** are the forefront of the U.S. worker health, safety, and justice movement. As a network of 25 grassroots worker organizations nationwide, we are dedicated to empowering worker leaders and driving collective action for safer, healthier workplaces and a stronger voice on the job.

Every worker deserves to earn a living and return home with their life, limbs, and well-being intact. National COSH equips workers with the tools and support to speak up, protect themselves and their coworkers, and assert their rightful role as essential partners in workplace safety --alongside employers.

TEAM

- **Jessica E. Martinez**, MPH, Executive Director
- **Eva Barreda**, Finance and Operations Manager
- **Jessica Samara Cruz Pineda**, Data Architect and Community Experience Developer
- **Tochtli Garcia**, Communications Coordinator
- **Brittney Jenkins**, Worker and Network Organizer, Southern Regional Coordinator
- **Susi Nord**, Administrative Synergist
- **Katelyn Parady**, Development and Strategic Programs Liaison

WE RISE TOGETHER

At National COSH, we believe that leadership is not something you wait for. It is something you build, especially in the face of injustice. That is why we created the We Rise! Leadership Academy. We wanted to invest in the brilliance and power of workers who are already leading the charge for dignity, safety, and respect on the job.

WeRise! was born out of a very real need. In a world where workers are too often silenced, sidelined, or put at risk, this program is a declaration. Frontline workers are not just essential. They are experts in what change requires. Each Riser brings a sharp understanding of their workplace realities. Through this academy, they gain the tools to channel that knowledge into strategy, organizing, and collective action.

We designed WeRise! as a space where worker leaders from across industries and regions could come together, build community, and deepen their ability to fight for systemic change. And in moments like the one we are living through now, when our communities are under pressure, rights are under attack, and economic and political uncertainty is growing, this kind of deep investment in grassroots leadership is more vital than ever.

This is not about a single training or project. It is about the long haul. It is about growing a sustainable national movement for worker justice that is grounded in lived experience and fueled by shared purpose.

To our Risers: You are not only the future. You are the present. Your leadership is already shifting what is possible. We are honored to walk beside you in this work.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Jessica E. Martinez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jessica E. Martinez
Executive Director
National COSH

TO OUR CLASS OF 2025

Dear Risers,

Congratulations!

You've made it to the end of an incredible journey. One filled with hard conversations, powerful learning, bold visioning, and deep reflection. But more than that, you've stepped into your power. You've shown that leadership doesn't come from titles or degrees. It comes from experience, courage, and the decision to act when something isn't right.

Each of your final projects reflects your unique perspective, your voice, and your deep commitment to building safer, more just workplaces for all. These projects aren't just assignments. They are strategies. They are acts of resistance. They are blueprints for what change looks like when it's led by workers and grounded in community.

At National COSH, we believe that the people closest to the pain should be closest to the power. That's why this academy exists: to invest in worker leaders like you, who are transforming their workplaces and communities from the ground up. Your work is part of a national movement to demand dignity, safety, and justice on the job. We are proud to stand beside you.

As you move forward, know this. The skills you've sharpened, the stories you've shared, and the relationships you've built through this academy don't end here. They are the foundation for your next step. Whether that's organizing a campaign, educating your coworkers, starting something new, or simply refusing to be silent.

Thank you for your energy, your passion, and your vision. I'm so proud of everything you've accomplished, and I can't wait to see what you do next.

In solidarity and admiration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brittney Jenkins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Brittney Jenkins
WLA Organizer
National COSH

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IL COSH - CWC | Rosalia Tenorio

CRSH - PHILAPOSH | Yuris Reyes

Fe y Justicia Worker Center | Yanoris Arias, Olga Castillo, Miriam Guanche, Martin Luna, Iris S Rosales, Noe Vasquez, Elizabeth T Vergara y Maria Jose Zarazua

Josefina Ahumada Worker Center | Tony Pineda

MassCOSH | Marta Helena Patino

Mississippi Worker Center for Human Rights | Latasha Palmer and Markelia Ellzey

Beyond The Bars | Freddy Pierre, Akeel Williams, Alejandro Rodriguez

SoCalCOSH | Fausto Hernandez Garcia

NYCOSH | María Isabel Coyotecatl Flores

IL COSH - CJWJ | Connor Warmuth

Border Workers United | Marcelina "Nina" Martinez

Worksafe | Pastor Robert Lacy

MEMORIAL FOR WORKERS WHO DIED IN THE WORKPLACE



Rosalia emphasized the importance of health and safety in the workplace to prevent life-threatening consequences. This is a fundamental pillar to guarantee safe and dignified work, where workers can be confident of returning home safe and sound.

She organized an art workshop where they prepared commemorative posters. They also set up an altar to honor workers who lost their lives on the job in Illinois during 2024. We invited local representatives and media outlets such as Telemundo and the Chicago Tribune. During the event, several workers shared testimonies about the injuries they have suffered in their workplaces. She carried out this project with her colleagues from ILCOSH.



The event was very positive. They attracted media attention, and we received a commitment from the Chicago Tribune to do a more in-depth investigative report on the importance of health and safety training for all workers.



NO TO RETALIATION ¡POWER ACT!

Yuris Reyes supported the passage of the Power Act, a law that protects workers from retaliation by abusive employers, by raising their voice and sharing their story to help create real change.

They contributed by giving testimony to support the bill and actively participating in meetings, helping in every way they could. Yuris even drove several days to Philadelphia, PA, to attend hearings and provide the testimony needed to secure the required votes.

“I am very happy to have been part of this fight and to have contributed to the passage of a law that protects so many workers from abusive employers.”

This experience changed Yuris’s perspective.

“At first, I thought we were asking for too much—heavy fines for employers and blacklists to expose how they treat their workers—and I didn’t think we’d get all the necessary votes. But I was wrong; we made it happen.”

The law passed with 100 percent of the votes. Everyone voted in favor — no one against.

Yuris is proud to show that when we fight together, we can win



COMMEMORATION AND LEGACY OF WORKERS WHO DIED ON THE JOB



FJWC Risers raised awareness about the lack of health and safety in the workplace and its direct connection to workplace accidents and deaths. Their goal was to educate workers, employers, and the broader public about the urgent need for ongoing training and the importance of sharing local and national data—especially the high rate of accidents among Latino workers and other workers of color.

They organized a powerful vigil that included prayers led by faith leaders, a memorial altar honoring workers who lost their lives on the job, and testimonies from workers who have experienced workplace injuries. The event also featured remarks from Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia, representatives from OSHA, National COSH, the University of Texas, and other partner organizations. Media outlets such as Channel 26, Univision, and Telemundo provided coverage. The evening concluded with a community dinner, creating a space for dialogue between participants and local leaders.

The vigil offered a sacred space for reflection and awareness, bringing together workers, support agencies, local authorities, faith-based organizations, the media, and the broader community. The Fe y Justicia Workers' Center used this opportunity to share critical information about workers' rights, available training resources, and ways to prevent and reduce workplace accidents. The event also helped strengthen communication and collaboration with a range of partner institutions.

PROTECTING DAY LABORERS FROM EXTREME HEAT IN ARIZONA



Tony responded to the high incidence of extreme heat-related illnesses and deaths in Arizona, particularly during the summer months. Our goal was to improve working conditions and the overall work environment to protect the health of day laborers and support their physical, mental, and social well-being. We also aimed to raise awareness about the risks of heat exposure and the urgent need for protective measures—especially given that Arizona still lacks specific laws regulating workplace exposure to extreme heat.

Tony led a series of educational and advocacy activities focused on worker safety and rights. He organized a certified training session for day laborers in collaboration with Carlos Preciado of ADOSH, and additional OSHA 10 training is planned with Eleazar Castellanos. On April 28, Workers' Memorial Day, Tony held an altar to honor those who have lost their lives on the job. Just two days later, on April 30, we joined a press conference calling for the rights and dignified treatment of immigrant workers.

On May 1, International Workers' Day, we marched in solidarity with pro-immigrant organizations in Tucson, including the AFL-CIO, Tucson Samaritans, Jobs with Justice, Milenio Noticias de México, Derechos Humanos, and the Party for Socialism and Liberation, among others.

As a result of these actions, day laborers are now better informed about the risks of extreme heat and understand how to better protect themselves on the job. On May 6, we were invited to the Tucson City Council, where Mayor Regina Romero issued a resolution in support of heat protections in Pima County—an important step forward in the fight for safe and dignified working conditions.

DYING ON THE JOB: COLLECTING STORIES FROM INJURED WORKERS FOR THE MASSCOSH 2025 DEATH TO WORKER COMMEMORATION EVENT

Marta sought to highlight how unsafe and unhealthy working conditions lead to workplace accidents and fatalities. Her goal was to promote collective organizing to demand decent working conditions, emphasize that many workplace deaths are preventable, and call on employers to take responsibility and actively improve job site safety.



Main Activities:

- Design the interview structure
- Prepare the preliminary draft
- Collect testimonies from injured workers who have requested support from the Workers' Center
- Transcribe the interviews
- Develop recommendations to improve working conditions at the aforementioned locations
- Support community outreach and promotion of the Worker Remembrance event
- Give testimony at the event on April 28, 2025
- Participate and provide testimony at the Labor Day event on May 1, 2025



These community actions have contributed significantly to raising awareness about the importance of health and safety at work, while strengthening the call for employers to take responsibility for preventing workplace hazards. By collecting real worker testimonies, the project aims to empower others to recognize and respond to unsafe or unjust conditions in their own workplaces.

The powerful stories that were gathered will be shared with the community to support organizing and advocacy efforts for labor rights. They will also be featured in MassCOSH's annual report, *Dying on the Job*, amplifying their impact and helping to sustain the movement for safer, fairer working conditions.

2025 WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY RALLY

Latasha and Markelia organized the 2025 Workers' Memorial Day Rally to honor the lives of workers who died simply while trying to make a living. The event served as a powerful reminder of the human cost of unsafe working conditions and sought to uplift the families and communities left behind.



They coordinated a moving rally that featured an open mic for local and national speakers to reflect on workplace hazards and pay tribute to fallen workers. The voices of family members who have lost loved ones on the job were central to the event. A cultural performance by MADDDRAMA added a profound artistic and emotional layer, grounding the rally in both remembrance and resistance.

The event brought together community members, advocates, and cultural workers in a space of collective mourning and empowerment. Attendees left feeling inspired and motivated to advocate for safer, more just workplaces. The rally helped build momentum for ongoing organizing efforts and reminded everyone of the urgent need for change.



FIGHTING THE “MIAMI HEAT”



Freddy, Akeel, and Alejandro launched the “Miami Heat” project to address the dangerous working conditions faced by workers—especially temporary and formerly incarcerated workers—who labor in extreme heat without adequate protections. Their work was grounded in the belief that every worker, regardless of background or job type, deserves safe and dignified conditions on the job.



The team designed and led a bilingual heat safety training to educate workers about the risks of heat exposure, their legal rights, and strategies for advocacy. Each facilitator covered different parts of the training, using storytelling and discussion to engage participants. To close the session, they organized a symbolic “march on the boss” activity and gathered petition signatures, giving participants a tangible example of collective power in action.



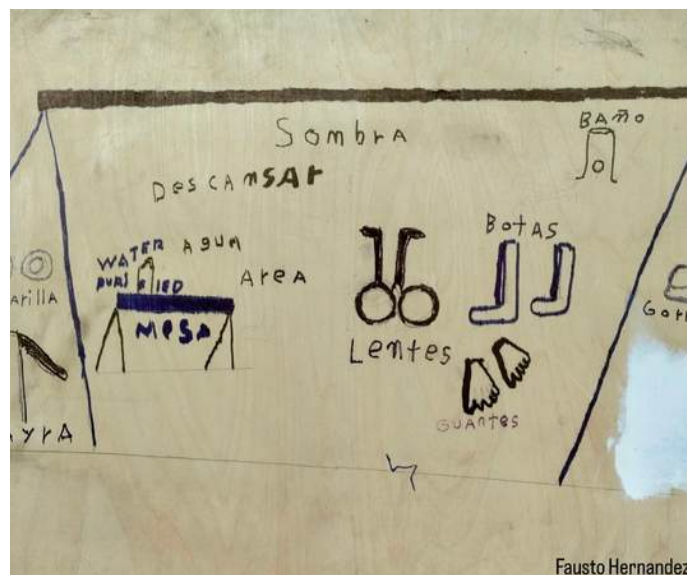
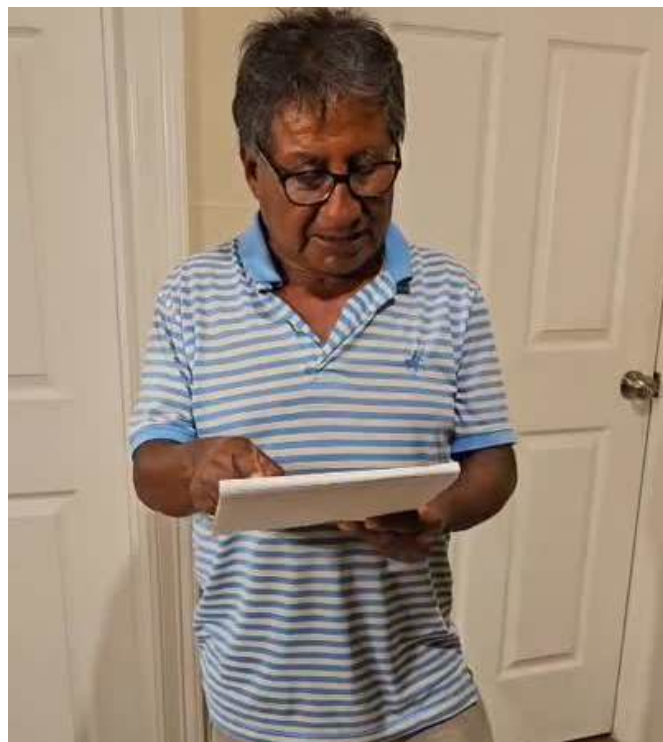
This effort brought together local workers, many of whom had never participated in workplace advocacy before. Participants left the session better informed, energized, and ready to speak out against unsafe conditions. The event planted the seeds for deeper organizing, with several attendees expressing interest in building campaigns for workplace safety and justice in South Florida.

CAR WASH WORKERS NEED PROTECTIVE GEAR, WATER, SHADE, AND REST!

Fausto, a car washer with over 16 years of experience, wants to inform the community about the risks faced by car wash workers. We use dangerous chemicals that can cause harm if proper protective equipment is not provided. Additionally, we work long hours under the sun, so it is essential that employers supply water, shade, and breaks to prevent heat-related illnesses.

The focus was on illustrating the basic protective equipment a car wash operator needs to work safely. I drew items such as a cap, T-shirt, waterproof boots, gloves, a mask, and protective eyewear. I also highlighted the importance of having access to drinking water, shade, breaks, a clean bathroom, and a dining area—basic necessities that many car washes unfortunately do not provide. I accompanied the drawing with a video explaining each item depicted.

The project produced a resource that clearly summarizes what employers must provide to protect the health and safety of car washers. Basic protective equipment helps prevent injuries, and access to water, shade, and breaks is critical for avoiding heat illness. This tool can be used to inform other workers and strengthen the demand for decent working conditions.



VENTILATION SYSTEMS: PROTECTING NAIL SALON WORKERS' HEALTH

María Isabel sought to protect the respiratory health of nail salon workers, many of whom suffer from asthma, sinusitis, or allergies due to constant exposure to toxic products and inadequate ventilation. Her efforts aim to ensure safe working conditions and prevent illnesses caused by polluted air and the lack of personal protective measures.



She participated in marches, visits to the State Capitol, and meetings with legislators and senators to advocate for legislation requiring proper ventilation systems in nail salons. As part of the NYCOSH Leadership Committee, María Isabel traveled to Albany alongside other industry organizations to raise our voices and demand this essential change.

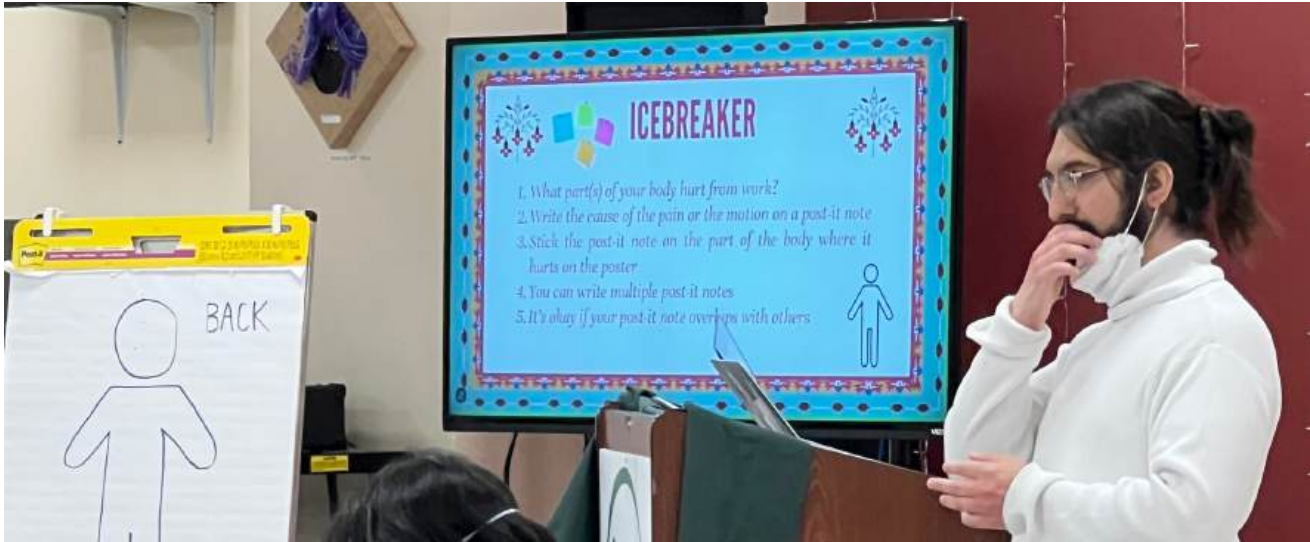


In María Isabel's words:

"We successfully passed the law! Salon owners are now required to install ventilation systems that guarantee clean air, protecting both workers and clients from exposure to toxic substances."



BUILDING WORKER POWER IN CHICAGO'S SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITIES



Connor focused on supporting South Asian immigrant workers in Chicago's West Ridge neighborhood, many of whom are employed in the service industry and face caste-based exploitation, racism, gender discrimination, and workplace health and safety violations. Despite being one of the city's largest immigrant populations, many South Asian workers remain unorganized and under-informed about their rights.

To engage and support these workers, Connor collaborated with Xochitl from Chicago Jobs with Justice and a Hindi-speaking volunteer to survey local South Asian workers about their concerns. They distributed multilingual flyers (English, Hindi, Urdu), and partnered with the Indo-American Center to conduct outreach and organize a bilingual health and safety training on May 24. The session covered OSHA protections, NLRA rights, and local labor laws, and included a discussion on organizing and employer retaliation. The Indo-American Center also facilitated a Know Your Rights immigration workshop.

The project directly impacted South Asian workers, including an 85-year-old doorman suffering from worsening neuropathy and inconsistent hours. Inspired by the training, he expressed renewed hope and a readiness to explore collective action. Connor is continuing to support him and his coworkers in building a campaign to improve their working conditions.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER: PREVENTING HEAT ILLNESS AND SAVING LIVES THROUGH EDUCATION

Led by Marcelina from Border Workers United, this project aimed to protect the health and safety of workers by reducing heat-related illnesses caused by lack of information and support. Many workers face exposure to extreme heat but remain unaware of their basic rights and how to safeguard their health on the job.

The project focused on raising awareness about the dangers of heat exposure. Through group presentations and interactive activities, participants deepened their understanding of key topics such as the effects of heat on the body, how to recognize and respond to symptoms of heat stroke, and practical measures to prevent heat-related illnesses.

By empowering workers with this vital knowledge, the project seeks to foster safer workplaces where everyone is equipped to protect themselves from hazardous heat conditions.



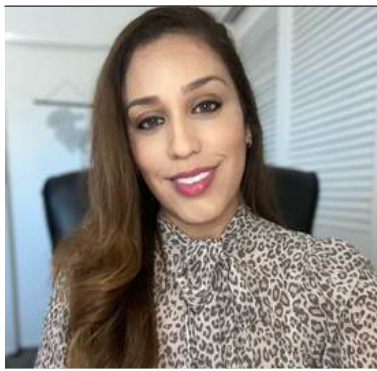
COMMUNITY AWARENESS PROJECT (CAP)

Pastor Robert Lacy launched the Community Awareness Project (CAP) in response to a critical gap in access to information about employment rights and health and safety protections. Many families in the community had recently experienced unfair or unsafe treatment at work and didn't know their rights or how to respond. This lack of information left workers vulnerable and isolated.



Through St. Andrew M.B. Church Private School, Pastor Lacy and his team organized a community outreach event and distributed flyers and pamphlets to raise awareness about both employment rights and health and safety protections. Attendees received practical guidance on what to do when facing mistreatment at work, who to contact for support, and how to advocate for themselves and others in the workplace.

Community members came together to learn and share during the event, with many expressing deep gratitude for the resources provided. Some attendees were able to apply what they learned to address workplace issues and retain their jobs. The project helped build a foundation of knowledge and support, empowering workers to recognize violations and take informed action to protect themselves and their coworkers.



Jessica E. Martinez



Brittney Jenkins



Jessie Cruz



Eva Barreda



Susi Nord



Katelyn Parady



Tochtli Garcia

We Rise!

WORKERS' LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
ACADEMIA DE LIDERAZGO
DE TRABAJADORES



Freddy Pierre
Beyond the Bars



Alejandro Rodriguez
Beyond the Bars



Akeel Williams
Beyond the Bars



Marcelina Martinez
Border Workers United



Jorge Mejia de Avila
Cincinnati Interfaith Workers Center



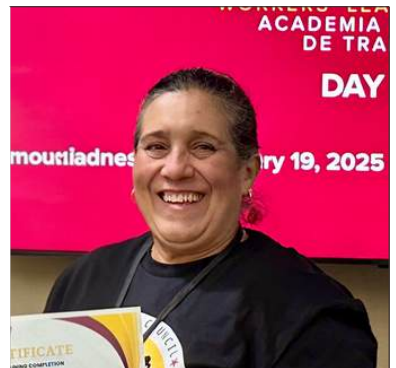
Yuris Reyes
CRSH / PhilaPOSH



Elizabeth Vergara
Fe y Justicia Worker Center



Martín Luna
Fe y Justicia Worker Center



Miriam Guanche
Fe y Justicia Worker Center



Maria Jose Zarazua
Fe y Justicia Worker Center



Olga Castillo
Fe y Justicia Worker Center



Noé Salvador Vasquez Guerrero
Fe y Justicia Worker Center



Yanoris Arias
Fe y Justicia Worker Center



Iris Suyapa Rosales
Fe y Justicia Worker Center



Connor Warmuth
ILCOSH



Rosalia Tenorio
ILCOSH



Tony Pineda
Josefina Ahumada
Worker Center



Marta Patino
MassCOSH



Latasha Palmer
Mississippi Workers Center for
Human Rights



Markelia Ellzey
Mississippi Workers Center for
Human Rights



María Isabel C. Flores
NYCOSH



Margarita Daisy Aguilar
SoCalCOSH / Pomona Economic
Opportunity Center



Fausto Hernandez
SoCalCOSH / Clean Car Wash



Robert Lacy, Jr.
Worksafe



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WeRise! Booklet 2025

**Building worker power for
health, safety, and justice.**