

Raise Worker Voice Campaign

CTUL (Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en la Lucha)

Because you've supported CTUL in the past, we don't have to tell you how the Trump Administration poses an unspeakable threat to the progress we've won, and the vision we have for a fair economy for all workers in Minnesota. President Trump's anti-immigrant and anti-worker Cabinet appointments signal a new kind of crisis for low-income workers of color. On any given day since the election, our new office has been packed with workers worried sick about their families and their futures, but eager to fight back.

They've come to the right place. You probably know that CTUL is a pretty scrappy organization. You won't find an organization that pushes every dollar you give further or leaves more on the field when fighting for workers' rights. We've accomplished an extraordinary amount with very little, and we're proud of that. But to rise to the challenge of this new era and to ensure that workers can get the tools they need to fight back, we need you.

Take Marciela Flores. Maricela is a single mother in her 30s. You've probably seen her out on the front lines over the last four years. We think she's amazing – she's resilient, incredibly charismatic, and is a powerful worker leader at CTUL.

Maricela came to CTUL because she cleaned a Target store in the suburbs for a living, and things weren't going well. Like so many workers we see in today's economy, she wasn't an employee of Target: she was an employee of a middleman contractor Target paid to clean its stores. The contractor forced her to work six hours a day, seven days a week, for poverty wages. She was living in a trailer park in Shakopee with her four kids, barely managing to pay rent and utilities. She didn't have health insurance or paid sick days, so if she got sick or her kids did, she didn't get paid. She struggled to scrape together enough to feed her growing family every week.



Marciela came to CTUL to fight for her family, but she quickly learned she wasn't alone. She met dozens of other workers like her who were confronting similar conditions in their workplaces. She learned that large retail chains pit contracting janitorial companies in a frantic race to the bottom to outbid their competition, and in that kind of hyper-competitive environment, employees' wages and benefits are an easy thing to gut. Workers faced rampant wage theft, decreasing wages, rapidly increasing workloads, little to no benefits, and dangerous working conditions... and had absolutely no power to advocate for their rights.

This broader perspective set Maricela on fire. With the support and guidance from CTUL, she started speaking up. And through the crucible of organizing for her family and colleagues, she became a leader. She stood up to the management of her cleaning company. When they refused to discuss her working conditions, she joined strikes and marches. When that didn't work, she drove all the way to Denver, Colorado, with her kids and co-workers for the annual Target



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shareholder meeting to share her story.

With CTUL at her back, Marciela turned her individual story into a worker movement. And we are going to need her, and so many others, to steadfastly rise to the challenge of the next 4 years.

But to do so, we need resources. CTUL is launching a two-year campaign to take the retail janitorial victory to scale, raising workers' voices across Minnesota, and we need your help.

We've built a great team over the last few years, but we do not have nearly the number of organizers we need to get to scale in a meaningful way. To be frank, we need at least six additional organizers on staff to scout out new low-wage worker leaders, train folks on their rights, and build the leadership of promising workers who will take our organizing work to scale. And you may not know this, but up until a few months ago all 12 CTUL organizers were working out of a single room out of a church. When members showed up to speak to someone on staff – a huge, brave step for most workers – the first thing they met was a locked door, thanks to the building that housed our former offices. Often struggling with very personal grievances, workers didn't have anywhere to meet our staff in private.

In response, we moved to a new building in South Minneapolis in September 2016. It's a phenomenal space, and I'd invite you to come see it sometime if you haven't already – we are at 3715 Chicago Ave. S., the old Lavendar building. The space has become an organizing hub, with CTUL, Inquilinx Unidxs, and CANDO all in one location. We have hosted countless organizing meetings, from striking nurses to environmental rights groups, the space is constantly abuzz with movement.

Now we need to invest in some basics like furniture, a new copier, and the building itself in order to provide our staff, workers, and volunteers the tools they need to organize, and to maintain the space as an organizing hub in South Minneapolis. We need your help to grow our new home into its full potential: a powerhouse progressive organizing center in the heart of the city.

To make this happen, we need to raise \$1.65 million over the next two years.

Considering CTUL has already helped workers win over \$2.1 million in unpaid wages and damages, has won 33% wage increases across retail janitorial industry, and has now won a permanent voice in the workplace for folks like Marciela, just imagine what we could do with more organizers and better infrastructure.

This is a critical moment for Marciela, for my team, and for workers in Minnesota. I hope you'll step up and make your voice heard.

In solidarity,

Brian Merle Payne