



Workers Defense Project
Proyecto Defensa Laboral



**Workers Defense
Action Fund**

CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ANNOUNCEMENT

**Dallas, Austin, or Houston, Texas
New Deadline: September 30, 2021**

ABOUT WORKERS DEFENSE PROJECT

Workers Defense Project (WDP) is a 501(c)3, statewide, membership-based organization devoted to workers' rights and advocacy, chiefly aiming to build power among Texas construction workers and their families. Our mission – to empower low-income workers to achieve fair employment through education, direct services, organizing and strategic partnerships – is accomplished through a network of deeply dedicated staff, volunteers and members – over 4000 immigrant and low-wage workers in the construction sector and their families. Through innovative organizing strategies, WDP has won unprecedented victories for construction workers, low-wage workers, and immigrants in Texas. WDP uses tactics including direct action, legal strategy, policy advocacy and communications to wage and win campaigns, working in coalition with diverse allies.

Our sibling group, the Workers Defense Action Fund (WDAF) is a 501(c)4 organization that seeks to build a long-lasting infrastructure that will engage working Texans in the electoral and legislative processes that affect their lives. WDAF educates and informs voters about their rights, advocates for stronger protections for workers, and engages historically underrepresented voters to elect representatives that will fight for working families. WDAF educates and mobilizes voters of color and mixed status families in support of electoral and economic and racial justice campaigns. WDAF has won strategic legislative victories for working families including paid sick leave policies, stronger protections from wage theft and safety protections for construction workers, and criminal justice reforms that disrupt the arrest to deportation pipeline.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Workers Defense Project and Workers Defense Action Fund seek a passionate, motivated and courageous individual to join our executive leadership team as a Co-Executive Director (Co-ED). The position will work in close collaboration and build an effective model of shared leadership with founder and current Co-Executive Director, Emily Timm.

For the position, we seek an individual with deep roots in movement building, particularly in the immigrant and labor rights communities. We are looking for a savvy, strategic thinker and someone who has a proven track record of waging and winning successful campaigns. The Co-ED must be visionary and forward-thinking, energized to lead a statewide power-building organization in times of economic uncertainty and a historical moment defined by failed political leadership.

While no candidate will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the qualifications and attributes listed below.

VALUES

The Co-ED must be guided by a commitment to racial and economic justice and an understanding of the intersectionality of multiple oppressions that constrain our community. They must be willing to speak truth to power. We seek someone who believes in the intrinsic wisdom and expertise gained through lived experiences. We seek someone who will work side by side with our membership and our talented staff to create and carry out a vision of winning just and dignified treatment for Texas workers. We seek someone guided by values of equity, inclusion, and integrity and who is willing to do the hard work to challenge themselves and others toward the goal of dismantling racism. We seek someone who approaches this work with humility and accountability to our members and seeks to build collective power for our community.

CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MODEL

The Boards of Directors and current Executive Director are committed to a model of shared, collaborative leadership that is effective in practice and embodies the experiences of the membership we represent. The two Co-EDs will share some organizational leadership responsibilities and will hold some distinct programmatic responsibilities. While this position announcement articulates the proposed division of labor, we are open to other ideas. If you are excited by this opportunity and bring skills and strengths that would fit a different arrangement of leadership responsibilities, we encourage you to apply.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Co-EDs of Workers Defense are the primary leaders responsible for advancing the organization's mission and strategic objectives. They share key leadership, fundraising, and management responsibilities for the organization; and they have distinct areas of programmatic responsibility.

Shared Leadership Responsibilities:

- Effectively engage with Workers Defense members, staff, Boards of Directors, Leadership Council and other stakeholders to advance the strategic vision of the organization;
- Focus on and be accountable to members' needs and participate regularly in member activities (in all cities) in order to ensure the organization's strategic direction remains firmly rooted in the vision and priorities of our base;
- Position Workers Defense at the cutting edge of significant developments and trends in the workers' rights and immigration fields;
- Represent the organization publicly and build strong relationships with community allies, elected officials, donors, funders, and industry stakeholders;
- Lead the organization's fundraising efforts, including the design of the fundraising strategy and the cultivation of relationships with institutional funders and donors;
- Develop effective communication and coordination systems to work with the current Co-ED with humility and a collaborative spirit;
- Support the creation of clear strategic direction through annual and long term

goal-setting that advances programmatic work in close collaboration with the leadership team, staff, and Boards of Directors;

- Determine the staffing requirements and structures needed to ensure the delivery of programmatic objectives; work with the Senior Leadership Team to hire, supervise and support the professional development of staff; and work collaboratively with WDP's staff union on a variety of labor/management matters;
- Develop and supervise the implementation of human resource policies and practices that build a climate of sustainability and one that attracts, keeps and motivates a diverse and highly qualified staff;
- Work with the Co-ED, staff, and the Boards of Directors to prepare a comprehensive annual budget for both organizations;
- Administer the funds of the organization according to the approved budget and monitor the monthly cash flow of the organization; and
- Provide the Boards with comprehensive, regular reports on the revenues and expenditures of the organization.

Programmatic Responsibilities:

While the Co-EDs will share many of the key leadership and management responsibilities (see above), each Co-ED will have clearly defined programmatic areas of responsibility.

The current Co-ED's focus will be:

- **Better Builder® Program (BBP):** BBP is WDP's innovative social responsibility program for the construction industry. Through the Better Builder Program, developers pledge to meet higher standards on their worksites, including living wages, safety training, hiring goals from local and certified training programs, and independent on-site monitoring.
- **Organizing and Education:** The Organizing Team engages our statewide membership base in strategic campaigns to win systemic change using popular education, direct action, and leadership development to empower members to lead our movement.
- **Employment and Legal Services (ELS):** The ELS department supports low-wage workers to address serious workplace problems, such as wage theft and safety violations, through legal services and direct action.

The new Co-ED's focus will be:

- **Legislative Advocacy:** Workers Defense engages low-wage workers and immigrants in policy advocacy campaigns to win improvements to their working and living conditions. Workers Defense has advocated for and won paid sick leave policies, rest break standards, construction safety protections, living wages, and protections from legal violations like wage theft at the local and state level.
- **Communications Strategy:** Our communications strategy tells the stories of our members and the vision we are building for Texas workers and their families. Our communications strategy uses earned media, digital and mass communications to inform, engage, and mobilize our members, allies and to drive a narrative that will shape

the future of Texas.

- **Civic Engagement:** Workers Defense Action Fund engages historically under-represented voters, people of color, and immigrants in electoral and year-round organizing campaigns to improve their lives and build power for working families in Texas.

As previously noted, we are open to other configurations of leadership responsibility. If you are excited by WDP's work and would like to apply with another vision for how leadership responsibilities are allocated to the Co-ED, we welcome your application.

QUALIFICATIONS

Workers Defense seeks candidates who are aligned with its values, vision, and mission. Although candidates may not hold every qualification and attribute, we are looking for leaders who demonstrate most of the following skills, experiences, and characteristics:

- **Shared life experience and cultural competency with our members:** Our members can see their own lived experiences in the Co-ED and the Co-ED can anticipate and be responsive to the needs and priorities of our members (low-wage workers, immigrants, construction workers, experience with racial injustice) in this unique historical moment;
- **Experience with power-building work:** Understand community organizing as our strategy for change, understand and embody our theory of change -- empowering those who have experienced oppression to lead our movement;
- **Commitment to language justice:** Written and spoken fluency in English and Spanish are required. The Co-ED will promote a culture of equity and inclusion for a multilingual staff and membership base through language access;
- **Humility and emotional intelligence:** The capacity for self-insight and learning/growth, the resiliency to navigate complex situations, and the ability to build strong and lasting relationships with colleagues, members, allies, etc.;
- **Strategic and creative thinking:** The ability to assess options, develop creative solutions, and take action based on trends and conditions in the environment, and the organization's vision and values;
- **Fundraising acumen:** Proven experience with raising an ambitious budget through institutional and individual donors is a plus;
- **Management and supervision experience:** While managing a team to take action together to achieve a set outcome is important, the Co-ED also supports sustainability and work-life balance so team members can stay in this work and avoid burnout;
- **Adaptability and rigor:** Demonstrate a willingness to be flexible in a changing work environment with a shared leadership model while maintaining the rigor and effectiveness to operationalize the vision of the organization and achieve results;
- **Foster teamwork and collaboration:** Work cooperatively and effectively with others to set goals, resolve problems and make decisions that enhance organizational effectiveness; and
- **Compelling public speaker and storyteller:** Able to craft a compelling narrative

about our work and to engage and move others to take action with us.

THE TEAM & LOCATION

The Co-Director team will report to a Board of Directors (currently 12 members including worker members) and will lead a talented and deeply dedicated 30-person unionized staff team.

Workers Defense has offices in Austin, Dallas, and Houston and there is a strong preference that its next Co-ED lives in or is willing to relocate to Dallas or Houston.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS:

This position offers a salary of \$100k - \$110k, depending on experience and regional cost of living, with the opportunity for an annual bonus. As an organization dedicated to equity for low-wage workers, our salary scale seeks to keep the ratio between the earnings of the highest and lowest paid employees fair and aligned. Workers Defense is a human-centered workplace that fosters healthy work-life balance. WD values a collaborative work environment and uses a team approach for our campaigns and projects. We prioritize time for team building and reflection and are committed to a democratic and inclusive work environment.

Benefits include:

- Fully paid employee medical, dental, vision, and life insurance
- Access to Employee Assistance Program
- Retirement benefits plan
- Generous paid leave and holidays, including paid parental leave
- A relocation budget for candidates to relocate to Austin, Dallas or Houston, if needed
- A staff development budget for training, coaching or other education/support

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

Workers Defense is an Equal Opportunity Employer and actively recruits people of color, immigrants, female, and LBGTQ individuals to apply.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

[Strategies for Social Change](#)[®] LLC (SSC) is conducting WDP's executive search and leadership transition process. SSC is a woman of color owned and led capacity building and leadership development practice dedicated to working with social justice organizations and philanthropy nationally. Referrals to potential candidates whom we should connect with or other inquiries may be forwarded to mariaelena@strategiesforsocialchange.com.

Format & Deadline: Please submit applications, in confidence, **as a single PDF** to jobs@workersdefense.org and include "Co-Executive Director" in the subject line. Applications are due by 5pm on September 30, 2021.

What to Include: Applications should be submitted via email as a **single PDF** and should include the following components in this order:

- 1) A cover letter that addresses:
 - Why are you interested in working with WDP?
 - What do you believe you would bring to WDP's co-executive director role?
 - How are your past accomplishments relevant to this position?
- 2) A résumé
- 3) A list of three references that includes names, affiliation, email addresses and phone numbers (References will not be checked until the finalist stage and candidates will be given an opportunity to notify their references in advance.)