

CANNABIS WORKER RESILIENCE PARTNERSHIP



The Cannabis Worker Resilience Partnership (CWRP) is a collaboration of seven community-based organizations, mental health providers, and legal services organizations working to support individuals impacted by the humanitarian crisis created by the illegal marijuana industry in Oregon. CWRP provides financial assistance, education and outreach, mental health counseling, and legal advice and representation to workers across the state.



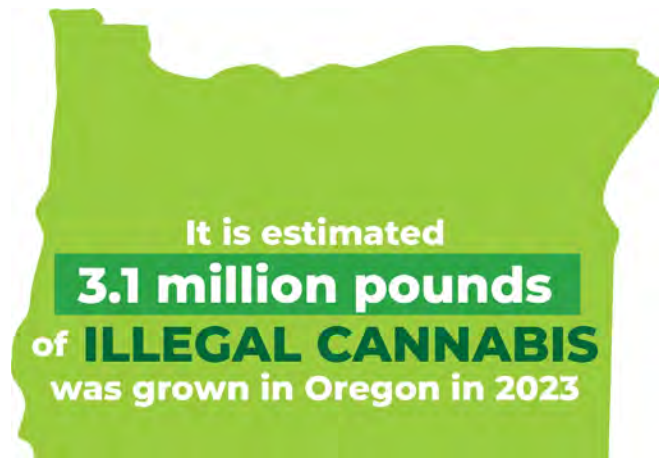
Contact The Cannabis Worker Resilience Partnership:

Direct for workers: 503-902-1262
For all other requests: 503-525-8454

About the problem:

Immigrant farmworkers are increasingly being recruited, often unknowingly, to work in the illegal marijuana industry. They report many serious abuses, including forced labor, threats and violence, unpaid wages, and alarmingly unsafe housing conditions. Workers continue to work even under these difficult conditions because they fear the consequences of leaving, due to the coercive strategies used by their employers, as well as the potential legal and immigration consequences of having worked in the industry.

They do not know where to get help or who to trust. While these problems are most severe in purely illegal operations, abuses are occurring system-wide as many employers are abusing the state's licensing systems or contracting with unlicensed labor contractors who are unprepared to ensure compliance with the law.



This is 3 times the amount of marijuana legally grown to sell in the state¹

1. Sophie Peel and Lucas Manfield, [Willamete Week News](#)

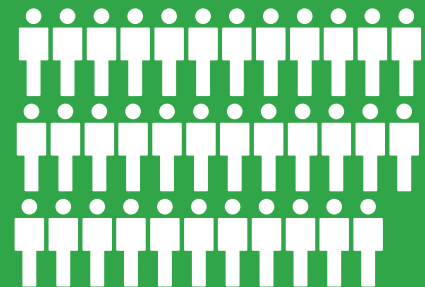
“
Many of the [CWRP] clients appear to have been experiencing symptoms related to undergoing a traumatic experience. Many of the clients' symptoms seem to be exacerbated by current stressors such as unstable housing, inconsistent employment, being far away from family, and financial difficulties.”

CWRP Mental Health Clinician

“
The program was a source of hope during my darkest times. It not only provided me with the financial assistance to keep a roof over our heads and food on the table so my children could be healthy and safe, but also gave me the emotional support to overcome my depression, process everything that happened, and move forward. It has truly been life-saving.”

CWRP Client

There have been 35 verified deaths of cannabis workers in Southern Oregon and California tied to the industry between 2016-2021, all associated with substandard living and working conditions or violence. ² A strong response is necessary to mitigate the harm done to these workers and communities and begin to hold the industry accountable.



2. Paige St. John and Marisa Gerber, [Los Angeles Times](#)

Who we are:

- Legal Partners

CWRP attorneys and paralegals support impacted workers with wage disputes, human rights abuses, and immigration concerns, and engage in policy advocacy to improve the state agency response to this crisis. **Oregon Law Center**, **Legal Aid Services of Oregon**, and **Northwest Workers' Justice Project** are the most experienced statewide providers of legal services to farmworkers in Oregon, with a history of collaboration with community partners.

- Mental Health Partner

Many of the workers have been victims of human rights abuses and other intense stressors that impact their mental health and wellbeing. CWRP provides culturally-aligned care and support through **Raíces de Bienestar**, a culturally affirming mental health non-profit focused on improving and reclaiming the emotional wellbeing of the Latine community across the state of Oregon.

- Social Service & Advocacy Partners

The CWRP community organizations provide direct humanitarian assistance in the form of emergency support and other financial assistance, as well as needed outreach, education, and resource and systems navigation. **Centro de Servicios para Campesinos** and **NOWIA Unete** are trusted by and culturally and linguistically matched with Oregon's farmworker community.

Willamette Valley Law Project, which provides additional support as the CWRP fiscal agent, has a long history of supporting and coordinating Latine community organizations in Woodburn and the surrounding area.

Impact to date:

In two years since the partnership was formed, the seven partners have accomplished the following:

+1K

Workers served directly with legal consultation and humanitarian services.

+3K

Farmworkers engaged through outreach on the program.

+85

Mental health services provided.

+50

Cases have been filed in state and federal court and the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries against employers on behalf of more than 100 workers.

+\$300K

Recovered for workers, through settlements or court decisions from resolved cases.

+\$250K

Distributed in humanitarian funds.

+15K

Distributed copies of educational materials on cannabis workers rights to community members.

Developed a geographic map of where reported grows occur so we can direct our outreach services accordingly.



The Work Ahead:

The partnership's objective is not only to support workers, but also to develop solutions to the systemic issues that perpetuate these abuses. It has become clear during our project that our existing resources in the state are insufficient and ineffective given the magnitude of the crisis.

We need to take action to increase or improve:

- State agency coordination
- Monitoring and inspections of license holders
- The options for holding property owners accountable in a legal process
- The statewide anti-labor trafficking response to provide wrap-around services and improve law enforcement training

By the end of 2025, we strive to:

- Support over 1000 workers with direct humanitarian assistance and mental health services
- Provide legal advice or representation to 500 workers
- Pursue legal action against 50 non-compliant cannabis employers
- Provide rights education to 1500 workers



“ Workers report living in crowded, unsanitary, substandard housing, and working seventy or more hours per week. Employers keep promising them they will be paid at a later date and often isolate or threaten them. Workers often feel they have no choice but to keep working. ”

CWRP Attorney

The CWRP has just begun to scratch the surface on responding to the human impact of this devastating industry.

Much of these past two years have been poured into creating a wrap-around infrastructure to support workers that includes legal, humanitarian and mental health services. We must continue this partnership to reach even more workers, offer continuity of services, coordinate and collaborate with law enforcement and other involved government agencies, all the while centering on the workers' experience.