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# University of Iowa Labor Center

**EMERITUS FACULTY COUNCIL**

May 5, 2024

**“A University for  
All the People”:  
70 years linking  
faculty, students,  
and alumni with  
working Iowans**

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Labor Center



**1957 Rubber Workers' Institute, UI Labor Center**

# Today, labor issues are central to today's challenges and strengths

- ❑ Essential workers and the pandemic
- ❑ Climate, infrastructure, just transition
- ❑ Immigration and labor
- ❑ Child labor law and policy
- ❑ Historic wave of labor organizing
- ❑ Women in non-traditional occupations
- ❑ Combatting labor abuse & trafficking
- ❑ The future of unemployment benefits
- ❑ Civic engagement for a robust democracy
- ❑ Public services – funding, staffing
- ❑ ...nearly every issue has a labor component

# FY24 Labor Center Staff



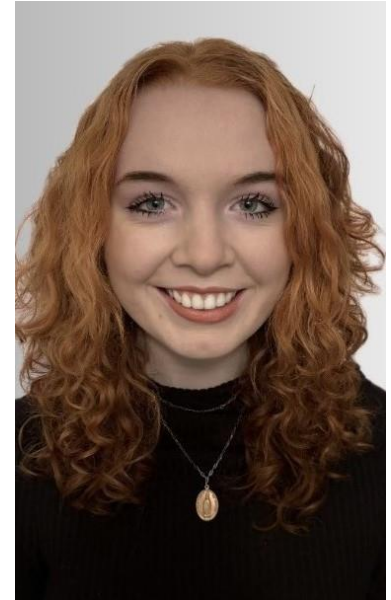
**Robin Clark-Bennett, Director,  
Labor Educator**



**Paul Iversen,  
Labor Educator**



**Sarah Clark,  
Secretary**



**Mia O'Conner  
Walker, Program  
Support Associate  
(10 hours/week)**

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**Mid-Year Labor  
Education Highlights:  
July 2023 – May 2024**

# National Reputation for Excellence in Labor Education

This fall, participants came from

**29**  
States & Washington D.C.

A stylized graphic of three figures holding hands, colored red, grey, and blue. The figures are composed of simple shapes: a red figure on the left, a grey figure in the middle, and a blue figure on the right. They are all holding hands, with their arms raised and hands clasped. The background is black.

# In-Demand Programs Serving Thousands of Workers/Year

1,936



Workers reached  
in our classes since July '23

# Serving Iowans Statewide with Classes Customized for Them



represented in our classes in just the past 9 months!!

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# On-Campus Conferences

- Public Sector Conference
- CWA 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Minority Leadership Institute
- CWA New Staff School
- Financial Officers' School
- Advanced Stewards
- Workers' Compensation
- 72<sup>nd</sup> Labor Short Course



# Off-Campus : Bringing the UI to Workers

- Stewards School
- Collective Bargaining
- Labor Communication
- Labor-Management
- Labor/Climate & IRA
- Labor History
- FMLA
- Child Labor
- Workers & Economy
- Organizers' Roundtable
- Labor/Immigration
- Public Speaking



# Conferences for Labor Press

- In Fall 2023, the Labor Center taught for two multi-state labor press association conferences:
  - APWU Postal Press Association
  - Midwest Labor Press Association
- Honored with MLPA Eugene V. Debs Award for support for labor journalism



# Labor, Climate, and the IRA

- In FY24, classes in Keokuk, Des Moines, Waterloo, Bettendorf, Altoona, and Iowa City
- Funded by a grant from Hubbell Environmental Law Initiative
- Workshops review the intersection of labor & climate, current climate science, and the quality climate jobs policies in the Inflation Reduction Act

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Contact the Labor Center to schedule this free 2-hour workshop in your community.

## LABOR AND CLIMATE: MOBILIZING FOR A JUST, SUSTAINABLE IOWA

Where do labor and climate issues intersect? What do working-class Iowans consider a sustainable future for our communities? How can we take action to ensure that recent federal funding programs reach our communities, upgrade our infrastructure, and create high quality jobs for Iowa workers and our children?

Contact the University of Iowa Labor Center to host this 2-hour interactive workshop in your union hall or community space, for a worker-centered discussion about this critical issue. Up to 12 free workshops are available, with support from the Hubbell Environmental Law Initiative at the UI College of Law.

University of Iowa Labor Center  
phone: 319-335-4144  
email: [labor-center@uiowa.edu](mailto:labor-center@uiowa.edu)  
website: [laborcenter.uiowa.edu](http://laborcenter.uiowa.edu)

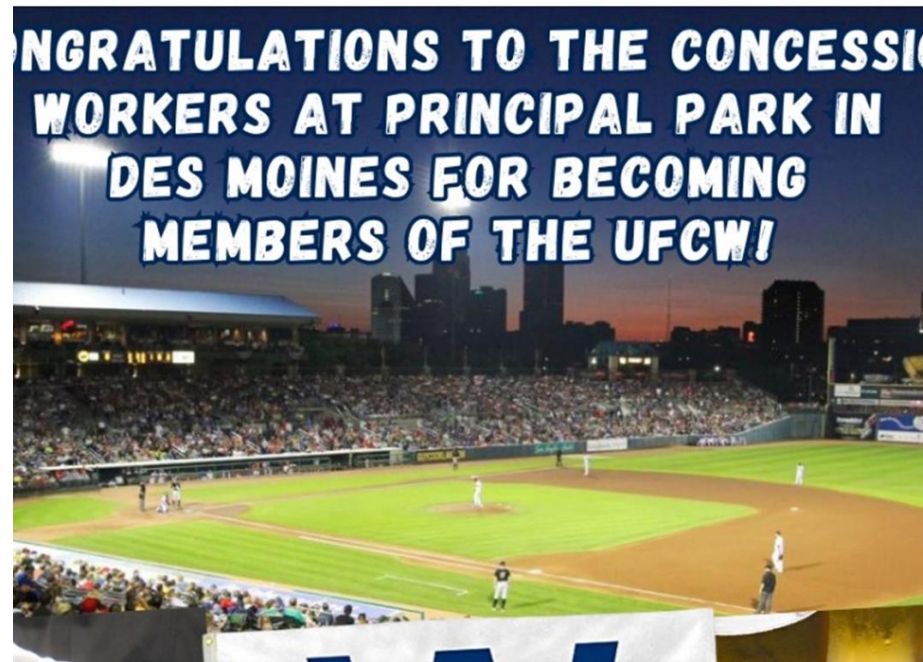
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Printed at the Univ. of Iowa Copy Center by worker's representative of AFSCME Local 72, Council 6

# Organizers' Roundtable

- Launched in 2015, the Organizers' Roundtable brings together staff and leaders across Iowa involved in organizing.
- Features organizing case studies, legal updates, review of organizing skills
- Now sponsored by the IFL



# Equity in Skilled Construction

- Iowa City ARPA: Of 29 total, 28 graduated from 5-week Fall 2023 course. 100% from communities underrepresented in trades.
- Labor Center serves as a bridge between nonprofits and construction registered apprenticeship programs.
- We are proud cofounders of the Iowa Women in Trades Network, uniting over 70 Iowa tradeswomen.



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**A hub for students,  
faculty, coalitions, media,  
and the public on labor-  
related topics**

# Collaboration Across UI

- September 2023: book event, Saket Soni, author of *The Great Escape* (with **UICHR, COL, International Programs, Medicine**)
- October 2023: Guest speaker, **Occupational & Environmental Health**
- November 2023: Labor Strikes panel, with the **Obermann Center**
- February 2024: **HELI** conference on IRA implementation





# Collaboration Across UI

- March 2024: Planned webinar on U.S. child labor with **UICHR**
- 2021-2024: Supported **Dept. of Neurology** research with ILHOP
- April 2024: Recruited speaker for **College of Public Health** event
- May 2024: New mental health workshop with **Clinical Psychology**



## The Rights of the Child: Children & Labor

Wednesday, March 6, 2024

12:00 to 1:00 pm CST

Zoom ID: 940 5320 3928



**Cesar Rosado Marzan**  
Moderator  
and UI Professor of Law



**Debbie Berkowitz**  
Kalmanovitz Initiative for  
Labor and the Working Poor at  
Georgetown University



**Ryan Drew**  
Local 150 and President of the  
SE Iowa Building and  
Construction Trades Council



**Jen Sherer**  
Director of the State Worker  
Power Initiative at Economic  
Policy Institute



**Norma Lopez**  
Chair of the Child Labor  
Coalition's Domestic Issues  
Committee

This event will be closed captioned. Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to attend all University of Iowa-sponsored events. If you are a person with a disability who requires a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this program, please contact UICHR in advance at [uichr@uiowa.edu](mailto:uichr@uiowa.edu)

scan me



**IOWA** Center for Human Rights  
Labor Center  
[uichr.uiowa.edu](http://uichr.uiowa.edu)

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# Mentoring and Connecting Students with Community-Engaged Research

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## Jensen Gaul, UI College of Law

Research related to the implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act and its interaction with Iowa law, to support statewide Labor Center workshops sponsored by labor and community partners, and the work of the Iowa BlueGreen Alliance

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## Meaghan Coble and Noah Gaber, UI College of Law

Researching and updating workers' rights summaries in the Iowa Workers' Rights Manual, a free public Labor Center resource designed to familiarize Iowans with state and federal labor and employment laws applicable to Iowa's jobsites.

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## Support for Undergraduate Labor-Related Research

Provided an overview of policies impacting wage theft, misclassification, and the "gig" economy for students in a **political science class** on current legislative topics

Conducted an interview for a student in a **journalism class** as part of a multimedia storytelling project on Starbucks organizing and the U.S. labor movement today

# Convening Labor & Environmental Leaders: Iowa BlueGreen Alliance

- Bi-weekly coalition meetings
- Research on IRA implementation
- State and national speakers
- Work groups on specific issues (solar siting, energy efficiency)
- Links to local initiatives (Climate Pollution Reduction Grants)
- Registered Apprenticeship Quality Green Jobs Tours
- Workshops and panel discussions on labor and climate



# Media Interviews on Labor Topics

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## **The history of tipping and employer FLSA tip credits**

Talk of Iowa, Iowa Public Radio, August 2, 2023

## **Wage theft and calculating firefighter overtime**

KCAU Channel 9 (Sioux City), August 4, 2023

## **Statistics on union membership in Iowa**

Radiolowa, August 31, 2023

## **A Look Into Iowa's First Unionized Starbucks**

The Daily Iowan, September 6, 2023

## **Workers injured in Iowa agricultural and construction jobs**

The Gazette, October 9, 2023

## **How the surge in labor activism fits into labor's history and future**

River to River, Iowa Public Radio, November 9, 2023

## **Trades workers and apprentices bolster Iowa's clean energy boom**

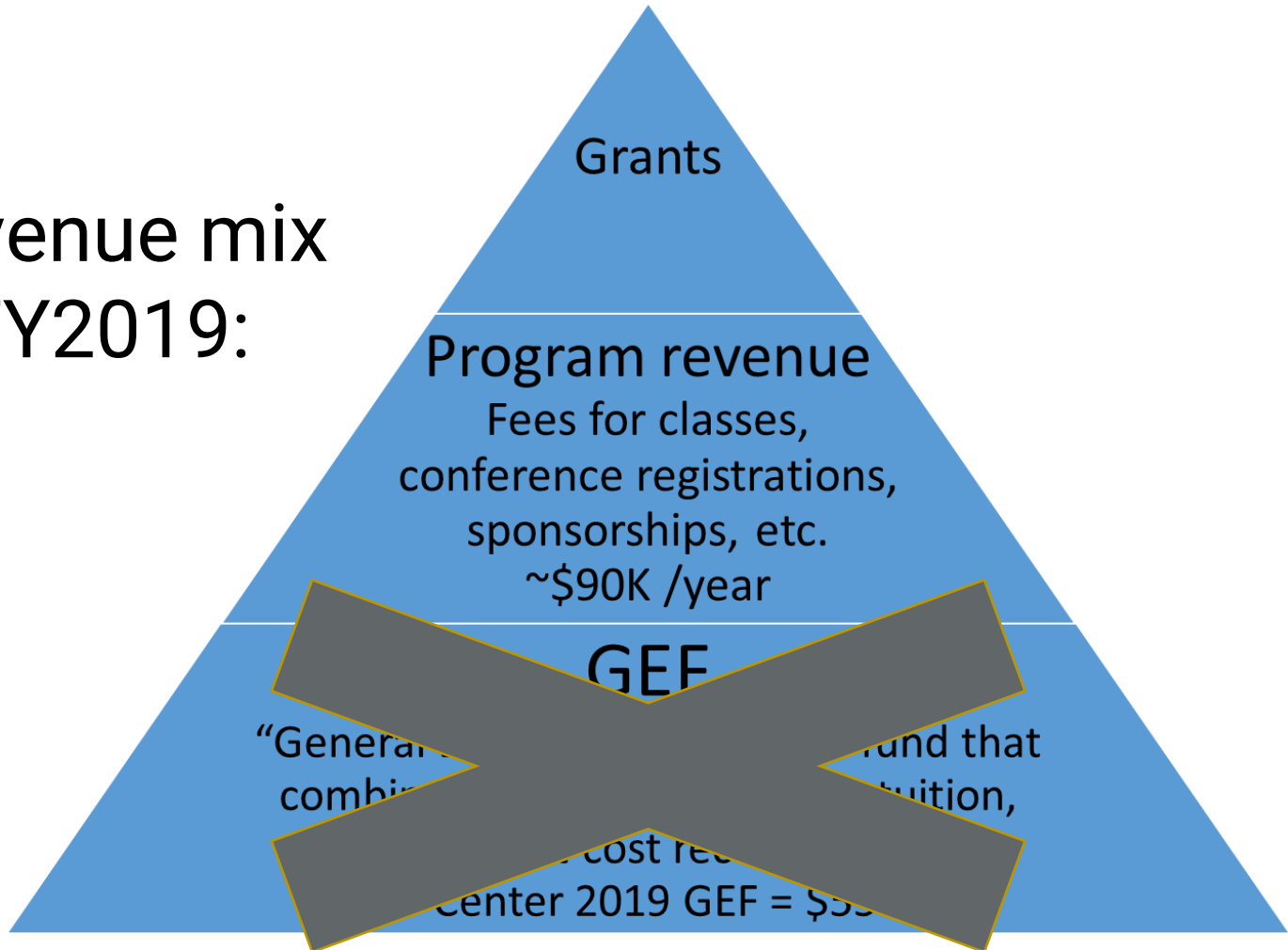
The Gazette, November 12, 2023

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# **Budget and Fundraising**

# Budget Context: Dramatic Shift in Labor Center Funding Since 2019

Revenue mix  
in FY2019:



# FY24 Short-Term Grants and Projects

Current Grants	FY24 Award
Iowa City ARPA (QPP)	\$100K
OSHA Harwood	\$159K
LIFT (with CWJ)	\$40K
Hubbell Environmental Law	\$35K
CIRCA (QPP – Mitchellville)	\$20K
BlueGreen Alliance	\$50K
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$404K (-F&amp;A and expenses)</b>

# Fundraising Goal: \$130K

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**Our largest-ever fundraising initiative! Our goal is to hire one additional labor educator to meet rising statewide demand for classes. Outreach to:**

- Regional and national labor organizations
- Law firms, banks, insurance companies that work with labor-related entities
- UI community members and alumni
- Members of the public who care about educating and empowering workers to improve the safety and quality of Iowa workplaces.



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# **Upcoming programs and educational materials in Fiscal Year 2025**



# **OSHA Classes on Identifying and Addressing Risks of Worker Fatigue**

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# New Next Generation Building Trades Leadership Initiative

Partnership: The Labor Center, the Center for Worker Justice, and the Cedar Rapids Iowa City Building Trades Council

Day-long kickoff summit on Jan. 20, followed by a series of 2-hour workshops on a range of leadership skills.



**STEPPING UP FOR IOWA'S FUTURE**

A new building trades leadership program for young workers in the Cedar Rapids/Iowa City area

**PARTICIPANTS GAIN:**

- LEADERSHIP SKILLS
- CONNECTIONS
- WORKERS' RIGHTS EDUCATION

**BEGINS JAN. 20 REGISTER NOW!**



A project of the Center for Worker Justice, University of Iowa Labor Center, and the Cedar Rapids / Iowa City Building Trades Council

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# What's being planned for FY25?

- ❑ National USW/CWA Health, Safety, and Environment Conference
- ❑ APWU National Organizing Conference
- ❑ CWA Minority Leadership Institute
- ❑ Ongoing Construction Equity Program
- ❑ Ongoing Labor & Climate Programming
- ❑ 8-12 On-Campus Conferences
- ❑ 60-80 Off-Campus Customized Programs

# Updates and New Materials

**Iowa Worker Rights Manual**  
 An Introduction to Federal and State Laws that Apply in Iowa Workplaces  
*updated August, 2017*

**Manual de los Derechos de los Trabajadores de Iowa**  
 Una Introducción a las Leyes Federales y Estatales que se Aplican a los Lugares de Trabajo en Iowa  
*actualizado agosto de 2017*

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA  
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 Website: <https://laborcenter.org>  
 Printed at

**PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST WAGE THEFT IN CONSTRUCTION!**

Did you know **1 in 5** non-union construction workers gets taken advantage of by unscrupulous contractors and falls victim to wage theft?

**¡PROTÉJETE CONTRA EL ROBO DE SALARIOS EN LA CONSTRUCCIÓN!**

¿Sabías que **1 de cada 5** trabajadores en construcción no sindicalizados son aprovechados por contratistas sin escrúpulos y son víctimas de robo de salarios?

¡El robo de salarios en construcción es un problema grave que puede engañarte haciéndote perder miles de dólares y costarle millones a nuestras comunidades!

Casi la mitad de todos los "jornaleros" sufren robo de salarios y pago insuficiente de horas extras.

**Los contratistas corruptos violan la ley al:**

- MISCLASSIFYING AS AN INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR
- ERRONEAMENTE COMO CONTRATISTAS INDEPENDIENTES
- ROMPER SU PROMESA DE PAGARLE UN CERTO SALARIO
- HACER DEDUCCIONES ILEGALES DE SUS CHEQUES DE PAGO
- NO PAGARLE POR TODAS LAS HORAS U HORAS EXTRAS TRABAJADAS

**Comprender tus derechos y saber a qué tienes derecho es clave para protegerte contra el robo de salarios...**

Common Good Iowa | EARN | IOWA Labor Center

**Introduction to Global Child Labor**  
 ADULT EDUCATION WORKSHOP

**Quick Guide to Iowa Unemployment Insurance Benefits**

*Updated March 20, 2023*

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# Thank you!

Help support labor education by donating via the QR code here:



Reach out to us with questions or ideas at: 319-335-4144

[labor-center@uiowa.edu](mailto:labor-center@uiowa.edu)

→ <https://laborcenter.uiowa.edu/>

