

CELEBRATING



10 YEARS



OF FOOD WORKERS



ORGANIZING

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONG!

We believe workers throughout the food system need to join together to challenge corporations in order to win power in the workplace and in their communities.



In 2019, we celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the founding of the Food Chain Workers Alliance. And what a 10 years it has been! The Alliance and our members have won so much, and we recognize that there is still so much to do.

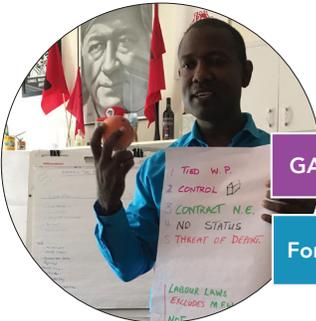
OUR HISTORY

Prior to 2008, a number of organizations representing workers across the food chain had been struggling to identify ways to integrate their work with the burgeoning national interest in food systems. In January 2008, the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United (ROC United) organized an initial meeting, which grew to a convening of eight organizations at the Labor Notes Conference in Detroit in May 2008. At this convening, the groups came together to get to know each other better, share information on their work, and explore the idea of collaboration. These groups included ROC United, el Comité de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agrícolas, and the International Labor Rights Forum. It was collectively decided that they did indeed want to work together while guided by the vision that all of these organizations -- with their high-stakes campaign experience, their membership, and their piece of the food chain -- could strategically build real power for all the workers along the food chain.

Through ongoing communications, this core team continued to share information about their own campaigns, provide support, and strategize.

Time spent together illuminated the incredible power that food workers could assert through a coalition of organizations with members across the supply chain, including workers in agriculture, processing, distribution, and retail. In July 2009, nine organizations launched the **Food Chain Workers Alliance** as a dynamic coalition building power in the food industry, from farm to plate. The Alliance was formed for two principal reasons. First, the members saw the increasing power and influence of the growing food movement. However, there was no real attention on the issues facing workers in the food system. Members believed that, as a national coalition, they could bring in the voices of workers and collaborate with food and food justice organizations to collectively strengthen and broaden the food movement. Secondly, the members also recognized the increasing corporate power over the food system. Given the increasing corporate consolidation of companies, they believed workers throughout the food system needed to join together to challenge corporations in order to win power in the workplace and in their communities.

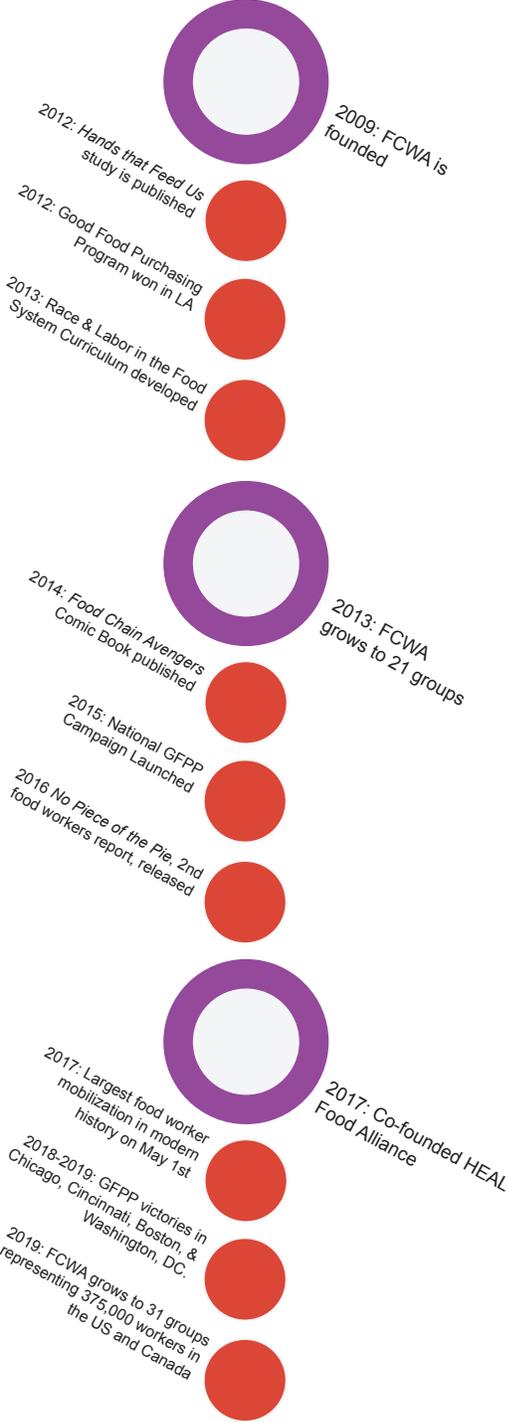
As of August 2019, the Alliance has 31 member organizations in all five sectors of the food chain representing 375,000 frontline food workers in the US and Canada.



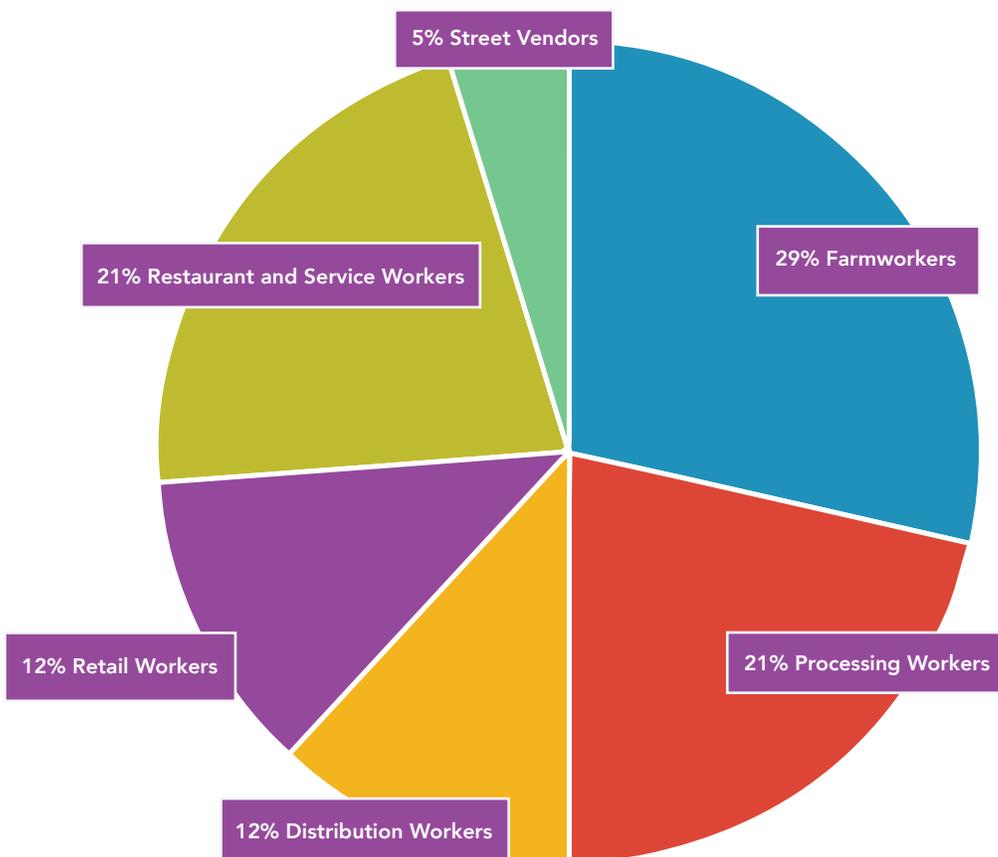
GABRIEL ALLAHDUA

Former migrant worker and member of J4MW

“Building power across the food chain creates hope. It gives a sense that we can unite and we can win. And whenever there is hope in a fight it changes the whole dynamic.”



OUR MEMBERSHIP



ELIANA JARAMILLO

Street vendor and member of Street Vendor Project

“At the FCWA summit we share stories of what works and what doesn’t, and how to organize. I met other members who are in the same struggle and felt like I was with family. Now I have a support line when I need it and it gives me peace of mind knowing that we are not alone.”

A VISION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM

In 2014, Alliance members created a vision statement of what they wanted the world to be like in 40 years - our north star that we're collectively organizing to reach. In 2019, the members updated their vision:

The Food Chain Workers Alliance believes in a truly sustainable food system that uplifts workers, communities, and our shared environment as well as provide healthy and locally made food for all. A food system that is democratically controlled by communities would produce food that everyone needs to lead productive lives. To encourage a vibrant and sustainable local economy, more food enterprises should be cooperatively owned. Taken together, this would lead to jobs that have dignity, livable wages, and meaning for workers and would create a food system that works for all. This food system can be created only through worker organization and solidarity, led by women, people of color, immigrants, and other frontline workers.

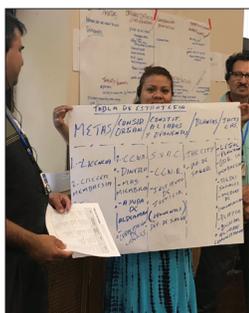
Our vision of a food system is one in which all work with dignity, livable wages, meaning, and the right to organize free from intimidation and harassment.

Our food system should:

1. Respect the skills and labor of all food workers, and allow workers to share equitably in the wealth of the food economy.
2. Guarantee livable wages and the right to organize free from intimidation and harassment.
3. Be democratically controlled by the communities it impacts and driven by the workers that create the food.
4. Have more cooperative ownership, less private ownership.
5. Provide local, healthy, affordable, and sustainably produced food that is beneficial to both people and the environment.



MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS



1. When we arrived on the scene, the food movement **narrative** did not include workers, and when it did, it often was about workers and not with workers. In the 10 years since, we have seen a dramatic shift. Not only does the food movement now include workers in their overall narrative, **involving workers now brings more legitimacy and weight to food systems work.**
2. We have built a coalition of **31 local, regional, and national food worker organizations** representing **375,000 workers** in the US and Canada on farms and in processing plants, warehouses, grocery stores, restaurants, and vending carts.
3. We have **impacted tens of thousands of food workers** through our training programs to gain skills as leaders and to organize in their workplaces and communities. These programs include the Justice in the Food Chain train-the-trainer series and our annual worker leaders summits.
4. We have supported our members in winning a number of **historic victories.** Familias Unidas por la Justicia won recognition as an independent farmworkers union in 2016 and won fair wages and working conditions in an unprecedented contract the following year. The Restaurant Opportunities Centers United has won One Fair Wage - the elimination of the tipped minimum wage - in 10 states and jurisdictions, and we have supported many members in winning a minimum wage of \$15 per hour in multiple cities and counties.
5. We have **won the Good Food Purchasing Policy** leading and supporting local coalitions in Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco, Chicago, Boston, Washington, DC and Cincinnati **affecting over \$575 million** in purchasing to transform the food system into one that prioritizes food worker lives, local and regional food systems, environmental sustainability, animal welfare, and the health of students, seniors, and other low-income communities. We co-led the working group at the Los Angeles Food Policy Council that developed GFPP in 2011-12, and we now partner closely with the Center for Good Food Purchasing which owns and manages the Good Food Purchasing Program.

- 6. We have **reached millions of consumers during our annual International Food Worker Week** around Thanksgiving to learn about and take action in support of food worker campaigns to improve wages and working conditions.
- 7. We co-organized one of the largest **mass mobilizations** of food workers in recent history when over 350,000 workers throughout the US held actions on May Day of 2017.
- 8. We **co-founded the HEAL (Health Environment Agriculture Labor) Food Alliance** that brings together local and national organizations at a scale intended to transform the overall food system.
- 9. We have conducted research with our members to release the **first ever series of comprehensive reports on food workers in the US**, highlighting how important food workers are to our economy. Food workers make up the largest segment of employment in the nation with almost 1 out of every 7 jobs in the US in the food system, yet food workers are the lowest paid, earning a median wage of just \$10 per hour.
- 10. The co-directors of the Alliance Joann Lo and Jose Oliva received the **2017 James Beard Foundation’s Leadership Award** and were also recognized as American Food Heroes by *Eating Well* magazine in 2018.



CRISPIN HERNANDEZ

Farmworker leader, Workers Center of Central New York

“The Justice in the Food Chain training was a great opportunity to share knowledge and ideas to continue growing and supporting our compañeros(as) and our communities. It gave me new energy to continue forward.”

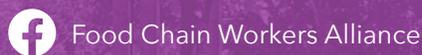


The Food Chain Workers Alliance is a coalition of worker-based organizations whose members plant, harvest, process, pack, transport, prepare, serve, and sell food, organizing to improve wages and working conditions for all workers along the food chain.

OUR MEMBERS

Brandworkers International
Burgerville Workers Union
California Institute for Rural Studies (CIRS)
Cincinnati Interfaith Workers Center
Comité de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agrícolas (CATA—The Farmworker Support Committee)
Community to Community Development
Fair World Project
Familias Unidas por la Justicia
Farmworker Association of Florida
Fédération du Commerce
International Labor Rights Forum
Justicia for Migrant Workers (J4MW)
Laundry Workers Center
Migrant Justice
Mississippi Workers Center for Human Rights

Pioneer Valley Workers Center
Restaurant Opportunities Centers United
Retail, Warehouse, and Department Store Workers Union
Rural and Migrant Ministry
Rural Community Workers Alliance
Street Vendor Project (NY)
Street Vendors Association (Chicago)
Teamsters Joint Council 7
Teamsters Local 63
United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 770
UNITE HERE Food Service Division
United for Respect
Warehouse Workers for Justice
Warehouse Worker Resource Center
Workers Center of Central New York
Worker Justice Center of New York



www.foodchainworkers.org

