



INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA-UAW

DENNIS WILLIAMS, President



JULIE KUSHNER
DIRECTOR
REGION 9A UAW
111 SOUTH ROAD
FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06032-2560
PHONE: (860) 674-0143
FAX: (860) 674-1164
PRINTED IN U.S.A.

GARY CASTEEL, Secretary-Treasurer

May 16, 2016

Rachel Tiven
Executive Director
Immigrant Justice Corps
17 Battery Place Suite 236
New York, NY 10004
Via email to rtiven@justicecorps.org

Dear Ms. Tiven,

We write on behalf of UAW Region 9A; the National Organization of Legal Services Workers, UAW 2320; the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys, UAW 2325; and the Legal Services Staff Association, NOLSW, UAW 2320, and the union members of the Urban Justice Center, UAW/NOLSW 2320. Together we represent the union members and Immigrant Justice Corps (IJC) fellows at Legal Services NYC, the Legal Aid Society, and the Urban Justice Center.

We are strongly opposed to your plan to restructure your fellow placement such that all IJC fellows will be on IJC's payroll and receive pay and benefits from IJC, rather than their host organizations. This will degrade the standards of living, pay, and benefits for the fellows who participate in this program, and will create untenable disparities between the IJC fellows and their union brothers and sisters at our programs.

We understand that your plan is intended to eliminate changes in benefits packages among fellows placed with different host organizations. By virtue of where they happen to be placed, fellows receive as much as \$20,000 difference in pay for the same work, and experience substantial differences in the quality of their health insurance, other benefits, and workplace rights.

The solution, however, is not to lower the amount and quality of compensation for your fellows, but to lift all boats. You could and should require all host organizations to supplement the IJC fellowship payment to bring them to parity with equivalent staff at the host organization – or even to the scale of the highest-paid host organizations. You also could and should affirmatively disclose to your fellows the pay and benefits available at the various host organizations, so that they can make an informed choice among the host organizations. Once placed, you should take the lead in setting standards for fair pay and benefits for all of your fellows.

We must note that this arrangement is nothing like law firm externships, where the law firm attorneys continue to receive their generous law firm salary and benefits while typically working for a matter of months, not years, at a legal non-profit.

We cannot support your proposed plan, and will vigorously oppose the placement of any fellows at our organizations under such terms. However, if you agree to continue placing fellows as staff of the host organizations who receive the same pay and benefits as other equivalent staff, we will support the application for IJC fellows of the Legal Aid Society, Legal Services NYC, and the Urban Justice Center. The work that IJC and its fellows are doing is of invaluable service to its clients and the immigration community. We would like our organizations to be able to continue hosting IJC fellows and participating in this righteous social justice work.

Sincerely,

Julie Kushner, Director, UAW Region 9A

Scott Sommer, New York Sub-Regional Director, UAW Region 9A

Gordon Deane, President, National Organization of Legal Services Workers, UAW 2320

Deborah Wright, President, Association of Legal Aid Attorneys, UAW 2325

Sonja Shield, President, Legal Services Staff Association, UAW/NOLSW 2320

Adrien Weibgen, Wendy Baez, Co-Chairs, Urban Justice Center Union, UAW/NOLSW 2320

JK/SMS/GD/DW/SS/AW/WB:cg;opeiu494

CC:

Victoria Neilson, Legal Director, via email to vneilson@justicecorps.org

Immigrant Justice Corps Board of Directors, via email to Board@justicecorps.org