



Using the Wage Theft Survey

Thank-you for taking part in the surveying process. You are playing an important role in the struggle against wage theft by conducting a local wage theft survey and helping people recognize that wage theft is all around us.

What is wage theft?

Wage theft is the systematic stealing of wages from workers. Wages are stolen from millions of workers in the U.S. each year. Wage theft occurs throughout the country to native born and immigrant workers alike. Wage theft happens in all industries and to workers at all ends of the wage scale, though low-wage earners are particularly vulnerable.

Why are we asking for your help?

In order to get to the bottom of the national wage theft epidemic, we need a better idea of who is being affected by wage theft. By surveying members of your congregation and/or organization, we can begin to grasp just how widespread wage theft really is.

Who is taking part?

Participants include: congregations, student groups on college campuses and in high schools, workers' centers, and many others involved in the labor movement across the nation.

How to administer the survey:

1. Ask participants if they have a few minutes to take the survey
2. Provide pens and a writing surface and ask them to fill it out
3. After they have completed it, thank them and give them the wage theft information sheet
4. After you have completed all surveys, tabulate results for use in your community
5. Make sure to complete all surveys by **November 1st, 2009** and send them to IWJ (IWJ Wage Theft Collection, 1020 W Bryn Mawr, Chicago, IL, 60660)

Although the survey results will provide valid information, the process of conducting the survey does not meet social science standards that would allow you to extrapolate from the results. Thus, you must be careful not to claim that the results represent exactly the same kind and extent of wage theft in the broader community.

Contact cgold@iwj.org if you have further questions.

Suggestions of where/whom to survey:

- Any public place
- Student union
- Ask professors for 10 minutes at the beginning of class
- Social justice groups on campus
- Social gatherings
- Job fairs
- Congregational events
- Movie screenings
- Social action groups

Publicizing the results

The primary goal of conducting the survey is to help those surveyed recognize the prevalence of wage theft and help the broader community understand that wage theft is in our midst. Consequently, your group will want to publicize the results of the survey. Interfaith Worker Justice asks you to publicize the results locally and join with others in publicizing the results on November 19, the Wage Theft Day of Action.

Local publicity can be generated in:

- Congregational bulletins or newsletters
- Campus newsletters
- Area/city newspapers
- Local radio talk shows
- Local television shows

On November 19, Interfaith Worker Justice asks you to:

- Deliver your results to a Congressperson and ask him/her to support the national wage theft bills and/or
- Deliver your results to local politicians and ask them to support or initiative local wage theft ordinances and/or
- Organize an action to support workers in recovering wages owed them.



Have you been paid for all the hours you have worked?

An Interfaith Worker Justice Survey

This survey will ask you questions about your experience being paid at present and past jobs. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions:

1. What work industry do you work in/have you worked in? (Circle more than one if applicable)
 a) Construction b) Service sector c) Cleaning services d) Food service e) Manufacturing f) Other

On the job, have you ever:	Yes	No	Not sure
1. Had part or all of your tips taken by the employer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Been paid less than the minimum wage?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Not been paid overtime or paid for fewer hours than you actually worked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Not received a final paycheck?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Regularly worked through lunch hours and breaks unpaid?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Had your employer change your timesheet to show fewer hours worked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Do you know friends and/or family members who have had their wages stolen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered **NO** to **ALL** of the previous questions, please skip to number 13.

8. How recently did any of these happen to you?
 a) Previous 6 months b) Previous year c) 1 year to 3 years d) More than 3 years

9. How much income do you estimate you did not receive?
 a) \$100-\$500 b) \$500-\$1000 c) \$1000-\$3000 d) More than \$3000

10. Did you try to recover your lost wages? Yes No

11. If yes, did you: (Circle more than one if applicable)
 a) Contact a non-profit organization b) Contact the Department of Labor or other agency
 c) Contact a labor union d) Other (please explain) _____

12. Were your wages recovered?
 a) Yes b) No c) Case still open d) Gave up e) Other _____

13. Do you consider yourself to be:
 a) African American b) Asian c) Caucasian d) Hispanic/Latino e) Other _____

14. Age: a) 15-25 years old b) 26-35 years old c) 36-50 years old d) 50 + years old

15. Gender (circle one): Male Female Other

16. City: _____ State: _____

Optional: Name: _____ Address: _____ Email: _____



Wage Theft – What it is and what you can do about it

What is Wage Theft?

Wage Theft is the illegal underpayment or non-payment of workers' wages. It affects millions of workers each year, often forcing them to choose between paying the rent or putting food on the table. Wage Theft is all around us. It robs from the government's tax coffers, resulting in cutbacks of vital services. Wage Theft puts ethical employers at a competitive disadvantage.

What are some examples of Wage Theft in the workplace?

Wage Theft includes violations of minimum wage laws; not paying time-and-a-half overtime pay; forcing workers to work off the clock; workers not receiving their final paychecks; misclassifying employees as independent contractors to avoid paying minimum wage and overtime (as well as employers' share of FICA tax); and not paying workers at all.

What is the Stop Wage Theft Bill?

- IWJ and its workers' centers network have spearheaded an effort to get a bill passed that would include the five elements that we feel must be part of a legislated solution.
- Allies in Congress are working with IWJ to get the Stop Wage Theft Bill introduced this year.
- The Wage Theft Prevention Act (HR3303), introduced by Congressman George Miller (D-IL) in July 2009, amends the Fair Labor Standards Act so that the Department of Labor (DOL) can offer stronger protections for workers. The bill will do away with a statute of limitations that limited the DOL to two years to resolve a wage complaint. This important first step also allows workers to file private lawsuits while the DOL is still investigating a complaint.

What can I do?

1. Organize a delegation of religious leaders and workers to meet with your representative and senators. Ask them to co-sponsor the Stop Wage Theft Bill.
2. Hold an educational forum for your congregation or student group on Wage Theft. Invite workers, worker center leaders, and IWJ leaders to speak.
3. Make sure that all workers you hire are paid all of their earned wages, and all businesses you patronize pay their workers fairly and legally.
4. E-mail Cara Gold at cgold@iwj.org to receive copies of the Wage Theft Survey to distribute.
5. To obtain more resources on Wage Theft and to keep yourself updated on the Wage Theft campaign, check out our website: www.iwj.org or go to www.wagetheft.org.