

The Gig Organizer #2

News for gig workers



Written by gig workers

Welcome to the Gig Worker U.S. Forum

Welcome to the Gig Worker U.S. Forum! This website was created by NLOC organizers to give gig workers in the service industry a professional organizing and communication space we otherwise wouldn't have. Unlike other workers, and unlike non-service gig workers, app-based drivers and gig domestic workers have no professional workplace, local enterprise, or agency that can serve as an immediate grounds for unionization. Instead, we are constantly scattered across entire geographic areas, always going to and from merchants and/or residencies, with no recourse for working class community and solidarity. We are both physically and ideologically alienated from each other, and yet we all have common struggles against common enemies, this or that exploitative corporation or employer, and the capitalist ruling class as a whole. Gig workers everywhere must find creative and revolutionary means to unite with each other in the movement for better working and living conditions, and with other workers and oppressed people in the struggle for working class political power. We have chosen to utilize this Forum as a key tool in the class-conscious gig workers movement to develop professional relations, discuss collective grievances and demands, coordinate public events and campaigns, join and create Gig Worker Committees, and more. Any gig worker is free to join and interact with the Forum, but only service workers can create or join an affiliated Gig Worker Committee.

Gig Worker U.S. and its Forum are administered by the Editorial Board of The Gig Organizer. We are a newsletter written by and for gig workers in the service industry that can be physically distributed to gig workers and therefore used as a tool of collective organization. Distributing the newsletter, along with other gig worker propaganda, is the primary day-to-day function of local Gig Worker Committees, geographic organizations of gig service workers operating on- and off-the-job. By organizing geographically, we cast the widest net possible across all crafts and sectors of the service-based gig economy in order to concentrate the forces necessary for an All-U.S. Trade Union of Gig Workers. Due to our unique conditions of labor, gig service workers have the opportunity to collectively employ ourselves to corporations or individuals for wages and standards we set for ourselves. But this is only possible with a trade union that collectively organizes our labor in opposition to exploitation and oppression. For service gig workers, this would mean exercising collective authority over the usage of our labor and means of production, including those personally-owned by us and privately-owned by an employer, rather than being individually reliant on a capitalist or group of capitalists for our employment.

Service gig workers are subject to some of the worst levels of exploitation and political persecution in the U.S. and internationally. The "simplicity" of our labor allows capitalists to pay us the lowest possible wages needed to keep us working, which forces us to endure grueling hours and unsafe working

conditions knowing we could starve or end up houseless without another gig. At the same time, massive corporations are making billions in revenue and profit from our labor, precisely due to how little they pay us. Gig employers are so obsessed with paying us as little as possible that they will strip us of basic employee rights to unionize, to strike, to employer-paid taxes, to full-time benefits, to a minimum wage, etc., so that we have no other option but to starve, lose shelter, and/or beg. Now with app-based gig work, employers can deflate the wages of entire industries and sub-industries by substituting regular W-2 work with cheaper, misclassified gig labor. The super-exploitation of gig workers blatantly exposes the capitalist nature of the U.S. Government and the usage of the legal system as a tool of the ruling class. Corporations are given absolute political and economic authority over their employees, the ruling class is given authority over the working class as a whole, and the little rights we've won can be easily stripped away. But workers have the ultimate power in society, the power of numbers and the power of labor. It is because a minority of "chosen" businessmen have a monopoly over the means to employ us, that they can exploit our power to their own benefit, and to our detriment. We must break this monopoly of exploitation and impose our own: a monopoly of working class political and economic power. The capitalists are dependent upon us out-numbering and out-laboring them. This is an obvious weakness, for if we organize our numbers and our labor, we can easily seize control over our employment, and no longer be dependent upon the capitalists ourselves.

Winter Storm Blues

By Jo Dasher

The Tri-Cities, like the entire eastern half of the continental U.S., saw a historic winter storm earlier this month. Last time I can remember something like that, I couldn't even drive! So now that I'm able to drive, let me tell you, that shit was horrible. I could not DoorDash, I drove once before the roads were basically fully cleared and that was it. But of course, DD had to entice us to go out and potentially kill ourselves. For what? A measly \$1-2 extra on orders! That does not at all make up for the risk of going out in hazardous conditions. We are functionally emergency responders in situations like these because we take on the risk to deliver groceries and food when consumers can't. But just like in the COVID pandemic, we're still paid less than minimum wage if you account for the costs of production we're forced to bear up-front. I say drivers should be getting paid 1.5x our total rate any time we drive in weather conditions that are worse than average. Fog, snow, heavy wind, any rain more than a light drizzle, hell, even darkness, all of these greatly increase not only our life risk, but also the risk on our vehicles. And for even worse conditions, like what we witnessed this month, we should be getting at least 2x our total rate.

Email us at gigorganizer@proton.me

If you'd make \$100 on a normal day, you should be paid at least \$150 for any weather or darkness hazard, and \$200 for extreme hazards. Gig workers must unite into organizations that can leverage our numerical and labor power to force concessions like these out of our employers and the ruling class as a whole. To win hazard pay, among the many demands we should be fighting for, we'll need to apply maximum pressure across as wide a local, regional, or national area possible, which means Gig Worker Committees cannot shy away from organizing the broadest amount of gig workers across all service-based crafts: delivery, rideshare, domestic, what have you.

Working Drivers and Community Defense

Shop organizations and unions are essentially political organizations of workplace and co-worker defense, integrated with the economic organization of production. Under conditions of fascism, there is an ever greater need for labor orgs to dedicate forces that can rapidly report on and respond to Fascist offensives at the workplace, or during production, most significantly ICE raids and DHS activity in general. These workplace defense units (composed of co-workers at a point of production), along with neighborhood defense units (composed of tenants, neighbors, and home-owners at a point of residency), campus defense units (composed of faculty, staff, and students at a point of education), and broad community defense units (rapid-response across an entire geographic area), all must form part and parcel of community-wide rapid-response networks that can be centralized at the level of report-making (ICE Watch), and at the level of coordination among distinct orgs and units.

Working drivers, and drivers in general, are becoming more and more targets of ICE and our Fascist Government. It is much harder to control the mobility of tens of millions of people, each with distinct vehicles, and traveling throughout entire geographic areas, than it is hundreds of thousands traveling via air, and in a select few vehicles. So now the U.S. is attempting to find ways to further restrict, bureaucratize, and even criminalize driving through various bills, offensives, and the constant surveillance of traffic via Flock cameras. Of course, immigrants, in particular undocumented or "illegal" immigrants, have been the main victims of the offensive on drivers, but caught in these attacks have been citizens patrolling ICE, or even just bystanders in the wrong place at the wrong time. Whether it be truck drivers, taxi/rideshare drivers, delivery drivers, or those just driving to work or to stores, federal and state governments are finding more reasons to stop people, and when they do, want to ensure a swift punishment in the form of kidnapping, or straight up execution. We recall here the DoorDasher who fled into her customer's house to escape capture from ICE, and the murder of Renee Good as she used her vehicle to defend neighbors. In Tennessee, a recent slate of bills would criminalize undocumented commercial drivers, require ICE to be called at traffic stops where individuals cannot prove their citizenship, limit driver's licenses to those who can pass an untranslated English test, and one bill would go so far as to create a state-level "centralized immigration enforcement" agency within the TN Department of Safety and Homeland Security, the same department responsible for driver's licenses.

Although some drivers have what could be called a 'workplace' where they coalesce more or less consistently and frequently, all drivers are largely positioned throughout communities, around commercial and residential areas, and thus have a much greater scope than the average, stuck-in-place worker. At the same time, driving is a basic form of mobility that is required for the majority of people to go to work, school, or to buy the commodities they need. Working drivers are thus in a unique position in which we can simultaneously defend fellow drivers and the community as a whole through patrols, reports, direct action, and emergency mutual aid, both on- and off-the-job. By effectively organizing working drivers around anti-fascism, we can combine the principles of workplace/co-worker defense with community rapid-response to establish both a sword and shield for the defense of working drivers, drivers in general, and the community as a whole.

Workplace response networks can be centralized across entire geographic labor sectors through New Labor Committees/Worker's Circles, and coordinated bilaterally or multilaterally with other sectoral organizations of the working class and oppressed masses. Multilateral operations would require the formation of geographic-based coordinating committees, coalitions, or popular assemblies, the principles of which should be espoused collectively by constituent organizations.

With our geographic and industrial principles of organization, Gig Worker Committees will begin integrating themselves with or establishing community rapid-response networks by ensuring ICE and other Fascist activity we encounter is reported on, and assigning the least vulnerable of our forces to take on rapid response positions in the cases of direct observation, direct action, and emergency mutual aid, in coordination with other anti-fascist community, workplace, and neighborhood orgs.



The Gig Organizer is a newsletter written for and by gig workers in the service industry and operating at the point of production. Gig Worker Committees are geographic-based organizations of rank-and-file contributors, distributors, and representatives united in the class struggle for short-term and long-term economic and political demands. The Gig Workers' Forum (U.S.) is a publicly-available communications tool for the sharing of advice, grievances, demands, and the coordination of mass meetings. Our long term goal is the formation of a revolutionary gig workers' trade union and a service workers' industrial union.