



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

## Steering Committee



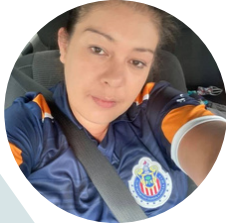
*Noemi*  
Retail worker  
Aberdeen WA



*Guadalupe*  
Childcare worker, house cleaner  
Raymond WA



*Patricia*  
Childcare worker & cook  
Raymond WA



*Rossy*  
Forest product harvester  
Aberdeen WA



*David*  
Veteran and retired logger  
Westport, WA

## Staff



*Patty*  
Bilingual Organizer



*Edith*  
Bilingual Organizer



*Hannah*  
Trainings Manager



*Stina*  
Executive Director



*Lavra*  
Bilingual Organizer



*Lindsey*  
Policy & Partnerships  
Manager



*Becca*  
Operations & Finance Manager



*Jeffrey*  
Narrative Organizer  
& Strategist



*Siobhan*  
Donor Organizer &  
Development Strategist

# ABOUT FIRELANDS

We organize in rural communities that have been starved of resources, places that have become political battlegrounds rife with scarcity myths, misinformation, and divide-and-conquer racism. We intentionally build solidarity and unity organizing multiracially with white workers and workers of color, with immigrant workers of color leading for all.

We invite rural low-wage workers to join a vibrant bilingual organization and to become protagonists in a new story for timber country. A story where everyone can live in healthy, affordable housing, where health care and childcare are available to all, where family-wage jobs are abundant, and where the land and water thrive for generations to come.

## A note...

This report was created by Firelands Workers Action/Acción de Trabajadores to communicate our work and the work of our sister organization, Firelands Workers United /Trabajadores Unidos. Firelands houses two non-profit corporations through our fiscal sponsors.

**Firelands Workers Action /Acción de Trabajadores** is fiscally sponsored by 501(c)(4) social welfare organization Rural Peoples Voice and is home to policy advocacy and lobbying. This entity is responsible for and pays for all political and lobbying work mentioned in this report.

**Firelands Workers United /Trabajadores Unidos** is fiscally sponsored by 501(c)(3) charitable organization Latino Community Fund and is home to base-building, leadership development, education, and research work.





## ¡LUCHAMOS!

From the halls of the state capitol in Olympia to the streets of Washington, D.C. to the doors of our neighbors in rural manufactured home parks, Firelands is fighting to win dignity for our people and for the places we call home.

2023 was a year of powerful organizing and growth at Firelands. In this report, we share our victories and struggles, what we've learned, and what has sustained us. Firelands advanced in 2023. We expanded our base, developed more rural leadership, carried our voices to lawmakers, and brought home results. With joy, strategy, love, and solidarity. We look into the future we're building together with vision and determination.



# WE WON CONCRETE GAINS FOR RURAL WORKING PEOPLE

At 6:30am on February 16th, a group of twenty Firelands Workers Action/*Acción de Trabajadores* members and staff piled into vans and headed to Olympia for our first **in-person** lobby day since launching the organization just before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Firelands leaders urged our lawmakers to fully fund health insurance for all, expand home weatherization programs and affordable housing, end the exclusion of immigrant workers from unemployment insurance, enact a wealth tax on mega-millionaires and billionaires, and more.

After years of virtual meetings, the shift to face-to-face conversations was electrifying. Throughout the day, leaders buzzed with a renewed sense of pride and power. We joined up with the WA Immigrant Solidarity Network's lobby day to march through downtown Olympia and a rally on the Capitol steps together with dozens of immigrant workers from across the state.

## We helped win:

**\$46 million** in funding for healthy homes,

**A pathway to healthcare** for undocumented immigrants,

**New protections** for mobile homeowners,

and more.



**FIRELANDS**  
**WORKERS ACTION**



# OUR VOICES ECHOED IN HALLS OF POWER

“I am proud to be with Firelands because we are fighting for a better future; for health insurance, for better homes, for what every one of us needs. And we have made progress as we have struggled. I will be proud the day I can provide my children with a safe home; a home where they can be healthy.”

-Norma, Firelands member



“My family doesn't have health insurance, which means we experience lots of stress and have bills sent to collections. In addition to my husband's health issues, last year they discovered a problem with my hip. I need surgery and physical therapy—but I haven't gone because we just don't have the money to pay for it.” —Rossy Rodriguez, Firelands Steering Committee Member, speaking at the WA Immigrant Solidarity Network rally in 2023.



# WE GREW OUR BASE

From February through May, Firelands more than tripled our capacity to organize! We hired 8 Organizing Apprentices and Solidarity Organizers to carry out a statewide deep-listening canvass. Every one of these apprentices were members, leaders, and graduates of Firelands leadership training.



Trained up and fired up, the Apprentices team took our deep-listening canvass methodology and participatory research survey to the doors. We spoke with workers, mobile homeowners, and tenants across 18 counties in WA. Families told us about the struggles of living with leaking roofs they can't afford to fix, toxic mold that makes their kids sick, living without protection from wildfire smoke and extreme heat, and neglectful landlords.



Our 503 conversations highlighted the multiple crises our people face every day: low wages, unaffordable and unhealthy housing, lands and waters under threat, narratives from the Right that shrink our sense of possibility, and divide-and-conquer racism keeping us isolated and hopeless.

But we offered an antidote. We invited those we met at the doors to organize for rent stabilization, weatherization funding and jobs, health care, and workers' rights. Dozens of people showed up at fall New Member Meetings to take part in popular education workshops about wealth inequality, share food and community, and train to advocate in the 2024 legislative session.

Firelands grows by organizing; door by door, conversation by conversation.



# WE ROOTED OUT ROADBLOCKS

Securing millions in new funding for healthy homes and weatherization in the last couple state legislative sessions was a big win for our young organization. But in Grays Harbor, we found that the additional dollars have not translated into the results our people need. Our members are still living with leaking roofs and inhaling toxic mold, and are still stuck on 200-year waiting lists for repairs and weatherization.

To build solutions and root out the roadblocks, Firelands partnered with HR&A Advisors and won a contract with the WA State Department of Commerce to conduct a statewide Needs Assessment, culminating in a detailed analysis and recommendations to transform low-income weatherization, healthy homes, and energy efficiency programs.

**It would take 200 years at the current pace to deliver home repairs and weatherization to every eligible home in Grays Harbor County.**

Through **community-based research** and expert interviews, we delivered a comprehensive report that maps out a path to deliver healthy & climate resilient homes to working people in rural Southwest WA and across the entire state.

**More than half of deep listening survey respondents reported mold in at least one room. 1 out of 3 reported someone in the household was sick due to conditions in the home.**

We enter 2024 with a sharper vision for what it will really take to weatherize all low-income homes in WA in the coming decade. This was our first experiment in collaborative governance, bringing community expertise to government agencies. Now, we are strategizing and identifying next steps to turn this knowledge into program and policy change—and most importantly, into healthy homes and good jobs for our people.

**WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO DELIVER HEALTHY, SAFE, ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES FOR WORKING PEOPLE IN RURAL WASHINGTON?**

**Jobs development to launch 5,000 union-wage public jobs to deliver energy upgrades, climate adaptations and home energy.**



With partners across the state, we collected 623 surveys through deep listening conversations.

**Shout out to our partners:**

*Got Green?*, Southeast Seattle

*Rural Peoples Voice*,

Douglas, Chelan, & Okanogan

*Pacific County Voices Uniting*,

Pacific County

*Washington CAN*, King County

*Puget Sound Sage*, King County

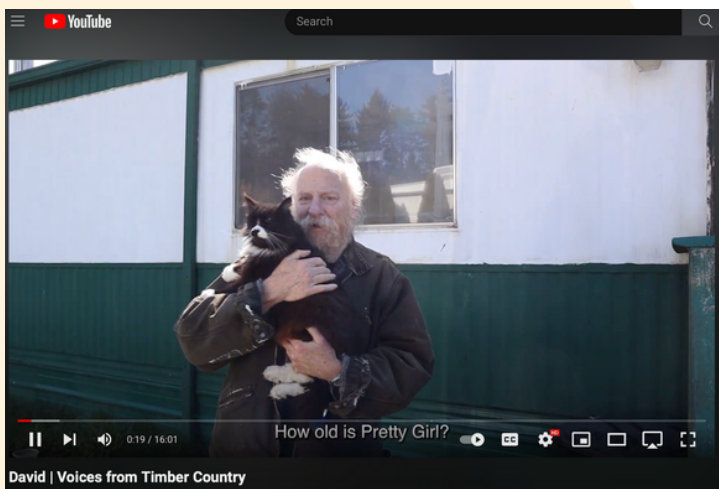
*Tenants Union of Washington*, Spokane

*One America*, Yakima

# WE TOLD OUR OWN STORIES

In another first for 2023, we kicked off our latest narrative project: Voices From Timber Country! These multiracial, multilingual video interviews with Firelands members cover a lot of ground: we talk about hard times, childhood, work, and hopes for the future. And we take on the myths that are used to divide us: we're told there's never enough to fund what working people need, that it must be our fault if we're struggling, and that we have to choose between good jobs or healthy lands and waters.

We're fed up with these false narratives—and we know that to organize and win, we have to offer an alternative way for people to make sense of the world. So we're working to change the story. In the coming year, we'll be launching dozens more of these videos on social media to build our base and help shift the dominant stories that hang thick in the air we breathe. The first videos are out now, featuring Firelands members [David](#) and [Norma](#).



Firelands contributed personal narratives and expert perspective in multiple media pieces. We were featured in an [article](#) by the *Center for Public Integrity* about movements in multiple states to tax the rich and invest in the things our people need—health care, child care, housing and more. Firelands members contributed their personal stories to an investigative story "[WA mobile home communities organize against 'economic eviction'](#)" in *Crosscut*.

**“We live and breathe the regressive tax system every day through the many different ways we’re seeing our communities facing decades of disinvestment.”**

—Stina Janssen, Firelands co-founder and Executive Director, quoted in the "[The Long Struggle Over Taxing the Rich](#)" by the *Center for Public Integrity*



# WE BUILT A JOYFUL MOVEMENT

On a blustery spring day in Aberdeen, a record 774 people attended our May Day Working Families Picnic! Together, we enjoyed delicious tacos, kids jumped themselves silly in a bouncy castle, and children and parents alike played homemade carnival games to learn about wealth inequality. It was a joyous multilingual, multiracial celebration of solidarity and the power of working people. Bringing our community together to celebrate is one way we build an irresistible movement powerful enough to win a just, green economy over the long haul.



2023 marked another milestone for Firelands: we formally joined the national People's Action Network and endorsed the Organizing Revival! Now we are part of a national movement of working people with a long-term strategy to shift the balance of power at the federal level and win results for our communities.

In June, 18 Firelands members traveled to Washington, D.C. for the People's Action National Convening. We helped lead 4 workshops and fired up the crowd during the closing plenary! We shared our vision for rebuilding Timber Country, compared notes on deep canvassing and narrative strategy with groups from across the country, and took to the streets of DC to speak out against the giant corporations who are funding fossil fuels and raising rents at the expense of our survival.



# WE CULTIVATED RURAL LEADERSHIP

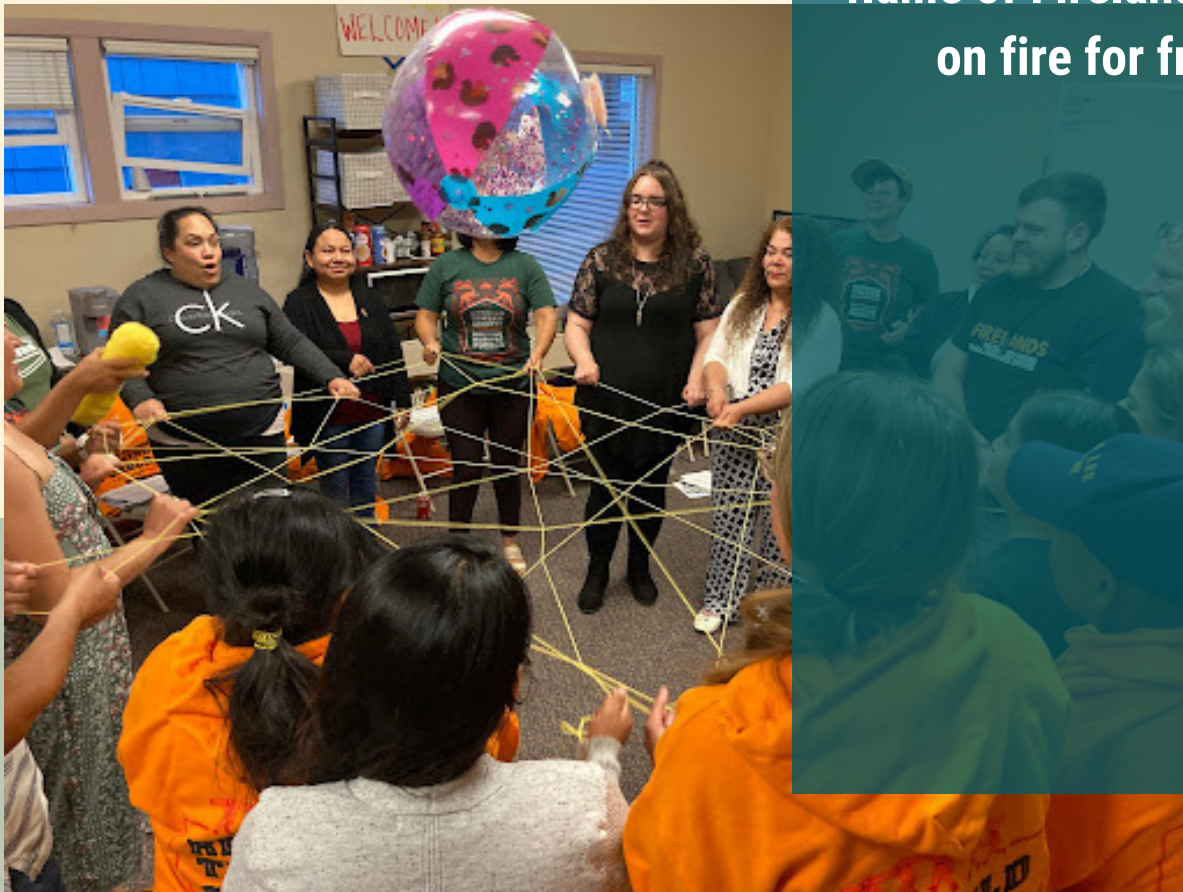
At Firelands, members lead with wisdom and strategy. In 2023, 25 graduates of previous leadership cohorts formed the *Comite de Lideres*/Leadership Committee.

These members form the vibrant core of our work. They serve on our steering committee, volunteer on hiring committees and event committees, fundraise, recruit new members, facilitate meetings and trainings, testify at the legislature, and more. Leaders debate campaign options, evaluate strategic decisions, and lead from the heart.

Leadership Committee members will help train the next cohort of leaders at organizing school in 2024!

**“This flame of positive change we have sparked is an unstoppable power we have. A power to believe, to love, to unite, to raise our voices. We carry this flame for our children, for children everywhere—because we deserve it, because we were born deserving. One by one, together, we will grow the flame of Firelands. We are all on fire for freedom!”**

Noemi,  
Steering  
Committee  
and Lideres  
Committee  
member





# ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH



## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024!

**2024 will be a year of political education, training, trust-building, and mobilization to move our base to participate in democracy.**

**We will be digging deep into our resilience to face the uncertainty and challenges of this election year, and flexing new muscles to build towards the healthy, just, green future we all deserve.**

**In the coming year, Firelands will expand our organizing staff, double our leadership cohort, build cross-racial solidarity, and advance campaigns with our partners state- and nationwide. We are grateful to every person who has stood with us, supported us, and brought us to this moment. As we say at the end of each event, "Our unity makes us strong!"**  
*La union hace la fuerza!*

5 years ago, Firelands was a spark, an idea, an ambition. Now we are a thriving, growing organization! We've built a culture rooted in hope, love, respect, solidarity, creativity, rigor, and resilience.

In 2023, we strengthened our organizational infrastructure to sustain Firelands for the long haul. We hired staff to support fund development and donor organizing and innovated resilience practices to care for our team. Our work is joyful, but working as we do in the face of crisis, it's sometimes draining and painful. We contracted with a bilingual trauma specialist to provide individual support and workshops for staff and leaders.

We are building a solid financial footing. Thanks to foundations and donors who are with us in solidarity and financial support, Firelands is planning for our future so we can scale up, and establishing reserves so we can weather unexpected storms and continue to dream big.



## Join us!

Make a tax-deductible donation to Firelands Workers United/Trabajadores Unidos, or a gift to build political power through Firelands Workers Action/Acción de Trabajadores at: [www.firelandswa.org](http://www.firelandswa.org) or via check (instructions on website).

**Our work grows because we organize. Can you join us and organize one or more friends to give to Firelands?**

# FIRELANDS

## Workers United/Trabajadores Unidos

fiscally sponsored by Latino Community Fund of WA, a 501c3 public charity

## Workers Action/Acción de Trabajadores

fiscally sponsored by Rural Peoples Voice, a 501c4 social welfare organization

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