

Labor Center

2018 Highlights

Delivering on UI's Mission for Iowa: Excellence in Teaching, Research, and Engagement



2,556
Iowa workers



from **61**
IA counties



Teaching and Student Success

Labor Center teaching in fiscal year 2018 included:

- 2,556 adult continuing education students from 61 different Iowa counties in classes on workplace safety, civil rights, compensation for injured workers, family and medical leave, leadership and communication skills, and more.
- 63 undergraduate students enrolled in two History general education classes.
- over a dozen guest lectures reaching hundreds of students in classes or events in the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Law, Education, and Public Health.
- mentoring student-led projects including: community-based internships and research collaborations, formation of a campus global fair trade organization, and a regional graduate Labor and Working Class History Colloquium.

Research and Publications

2018 research highlights included:

- publication of groundbreaking assessment of impacts of 2017 changes to Iowa's workers' compensation law, co-authored by first-year law student Emily Schott.
- securing a highly-competitive federal NEH grant of \$195,000 to make oral history interviews of thousands of Iowans fully accessible to the public.
- release of an updated edition of the *Iowa Workers' Rights Manual* in English and Spanish—the only comprehensive guide to over 50 federal and state laws covering Iowa workplaces.
- contributions to four intercollegiate research teams developing proposals for innovative projects in Iowa history, workplace safety, and health literacy.
- staff research published in *Labor Studies Journal*, *Labor Online*, and in a new edited volume of history essays, *Wide-Open Town: Kansas City in the Pendergast Era* (2018 U Kansas Press).

Engaging Iowans across 99 Counties

2018 Labor Center outreach and engagement included:

- spring and fall public conferences bringing together UI students and faculty with Iowa workers, attorneys, nonprofit leaders, and national and international experts on “Worker Power in a Globalized World” and “Immigration Justice”
- the Iowa Worker Rights Project, with support from labor sponsors and a UI Community Impact Grant, took worker rights education to underserved Iowans in Dubuque, Council Bluffs, Iowa City, and Ottumwa, and will extend to Marshalltown and Waterloo in 2019.
- the Iowa Labor History Oral Project collected a dozen new interviews, delivered statewide presentations for K-12 teachers, and won a Humanities Iowa grant to take its “Speaking of Work” exhibit on the road in 2019



THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Labor Center

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About the Labor Center

The Labor Center is a unit of The University of Iowa College of Law. Since 1951, the Center has acted as a bridge between the University and Iowa’s labor community. Our mission is to provide education and research on workplace and labor issues.

The Center annually conducts a series of **open-enrollment, non-credit short courses and seminars** on UI campus, regularly **travels to communities across Iowa** to provide classes on a range of topics tailored to the needs and interests of Iowa workers, and houses interdisciplinary research projects including the **Iowa Labor History Oral Project**.

Our staff also provide **research assistance and technical information** to worker organizations, serve as a **research hub for UI faculty, staff, and students**, create **experiential learning opportunities** including community-based internship placements, and disseminate information on labor issues to the public.

Labor Center Awarded Iowa Workforce Development Grant to Connect Underserved Iowans with High-Quality Jobs

We are thrilled to announce that Iowa Workforce Development has awarded a \$125,000 contract to the Labor Center to create a pilot pre-apprenticeship program focused on recruiting underrepresented groups for Iowa Registered Apprentice programs. During 2019-2020, the project will draw on the Labor Center’s existing rich statewide network of partners, including employers with apprenticeship programs in advanced manufacturing and construction, and labor, community, faith-based, and nonprofit organizations engaged in promoting high-quality jobs for Iowans.

The grant is linked to state and national efforts backed by the US Department of Labor to promote and diversify registered apprenticeship programs

Labor Center’s new preapprentice program will link Iowans who are traditionally underrepresented in advanced manufacturing or construction careers—including women, youth of color, veterans, workers with disabilities, and Iowans re-entering the workforce—with opportunities to “earn and learn” via a registered apprenticeship in fields with high demand for workers.

Labor Center Honored with Human Rights Award



The Iowa City Human Rights Commission recognized the Labor Center at its annual awards breakfast in October, where Labor Center Director Jennifer Sherer (second from left) accepted the 2018 Bill Reagan Award on behalf of the Labor Center, for outstanding contributions to human rights by an organization. Photo credit: Maeve Clark