



March 19, 2021

To the Mid-Hudson delegation in Albany:

We, the undersigned organizations from the Mid-Hudson Valley, are united in our support of the Excluded Worker Fund. This fund will provide desperately needed economic assistance to hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who have been excluded from federal and state economic relief.

Undocumented workers, people recently released from incarceration, and other excluded workers have been struggling without a cent of government aid for more than 300 days as the COVID-19 pandemic has battered their communities. Without income or government support, they have struggled to buy groceries, pay rent and medical bills, and afford basic necessities for their families.

When excluded workers are employed, they do tough physical and emotional labor such as growing and harvesting our local crops, serving and maintaining our local restaurants, landscaping, and caring for our loved ones. They are often paid with low wages, and are vulnerable to wage theft and other employer abuses. Once let go, they do not qualify for state Unemployment Insurance, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and other sources of replacement income - even though many of these workers pay taxes that help make these government programs possible.

In the past year, social justice organizations have partnered with foundations and charities to provide food, rent, and assistance paying utility bills for many undocumented families. That cannot be sustained. It is time for New York State government to act.

As progressive organizations in the Mid-Hudson Valley, we fight for economic and racial justice for working people and our Black, Brown, and immigrant neighbors. Excluded workers are an essential part of our communities, and it's time the state government provided excluded workers with the same support available to everyone else.

The Excluded Worker Fund ([S4543/A5421](#)) will provide direct, flat rate monthly cash payments to families on par with the unemployment benefits other New Yorkers have received. The fund will provide payments that are retroactive to when the economic crisis began and until the COVID-19 state of emergency is over, with flexible application and proof requirements given the urgency of this crisis.

The undersigned organizations are proud of the work we do to support and elect state representatives committed to equity, justice, and service to our most vulnerable Ulster County neighbors. Some of us work as organizations to get out the progressive Democratic vote; others of us back the campaign work our members do as individuals.

Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, and the Mid-Hudson delegation must lead to deliver real relief to excluded workers. The \$2.1 billion allocated in the one-house budget bills is a start but not enough: to avoid shortchanging excluded workers and meet the scale of the problem they face, we need **\$3.5 billion** in this year's budget.

We call on our Senators and Assemblymembers to publicly support the Excluded Worker Fund, advocate within conference for a \$3.5 billion fund, and to encourage other their peer legislators to do the same. Nonprofits and mutual aid groups have gone above and beyond to serve this population during this past year -- it's time for the government to step up.

In gratitude for your attention,

Citizen Action
Indivisible New Paltz CD19
Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson
Ulster Activists (U-Act)
Ulster Immigrant Defense Network (UIDN)
Ulster People for Justice and Democracy (UP)
Woodstock Immigrant Support (WIS)
Worker Justice Center of New York – Hudson Valley