



Newsletter

Year 01 Edition 09 - February, 2023

Together fighting for social justice

We barely started 2023, and it's already February! Time passes quickly, and that's why we continue to work on our projects and always look for ways to serve our community.

In this newsletter, we will also highlight the study we completed in partnership with the Civil Rights Clinic at Boston College University on implementing the Domestic Workers' Rights Act in Massachusetts. Most domestic workers and their employers are still unaware of their rights. However, with the support of our community and other organizations, we will expand awareness about this important topic to allow more people to have their rights protected.

This month, we also debut our new podcast, which will be a fortnightly communication channel to discuss important issues. We are pleased with this opportunity to offer a reliable information source for our immigrant community.

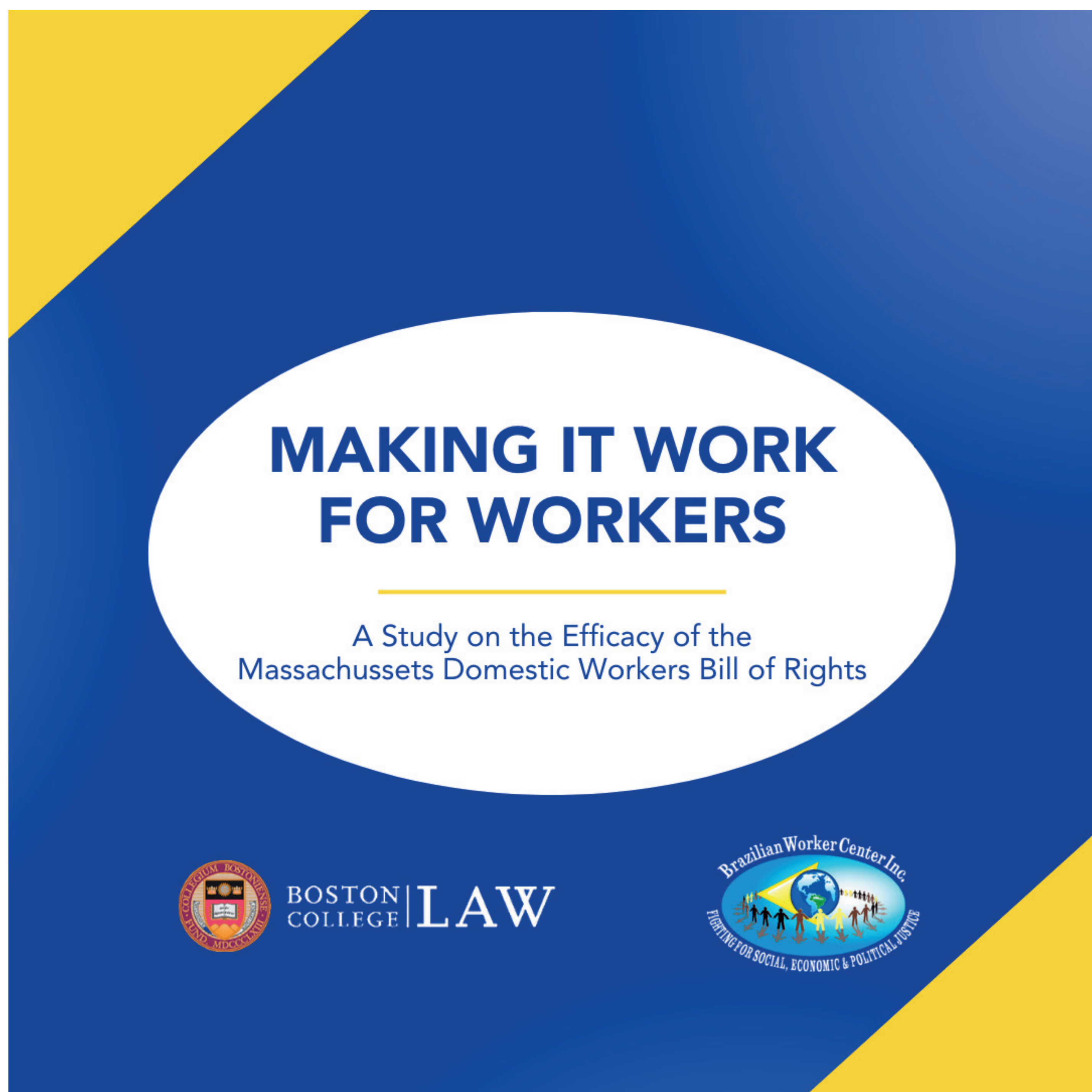
Lastly, we would like to highlight the work being done to implement the Work and Family Mobility law, which will be in effect starting on the 1st of July. We are participating in important meetings, and soon,



we will launch a campaign to guide the community on the step-by-step application to obtain a Driver's License and how to avoid scams.

We have a lot of work ahead of us, but together we will be able to move toward greater social justice and well-being for all. We count on your collaboration!

Lenita Reason
Executive Director
Brazilian Worker Center



Workers are still unknowing their rights

Even with a law in place since 2015, most domestic workers in Massachusetts still need to be aware of their rights. This is what a study on the effectiveness of applying the Domestic Workers' Rights Act, carried out in partnership with the Boston College Law School Civil Rights Clinic, pointed out.

The report was presented in January, revealing other essential data about this category of workers. Domestic workers, employers of domestic workers, government agencies, and workers' centers were interviewed.

The study presentation featured Boston College researchers, policymakers, representatives of state and federal law enforcement agencies, BWC Executive Director Lenita Reason, and BWC Board member and domestic worker Erika Souza. Among the main conclusions of the study are:

- More than 75% of domestic workers and nearly half of the employers had little or no knowledge of the law.
- Over 90% of workers reported working 16 hours or more at their primary workplace, meaning the employer would be required to provide a contract. However, over 1 in 10 respondents received a contract or the right to 8 weeks of unpaid maternity leave.
- 43% of employers who hire a domestic worker for 16 or more hours a week reported not providing their workers with a written contract.
- For workers who knew their rights had been violated, nearly 50% reported that they did not report because they did not understand the process, and around a quarter said they feared retaliation.
- Worker Centers lack funding to provide regular education to domestic workers about their rights and assist them in filing claims with the Massachusetts Attorney General, Division of Fair Wage (A-GO-FLD), and U.S. Department of Labor - Wage and Hour Division (DOL).

Access the full study at this link: tinyurl.com/DWBRreport

BWC will intensify rights outreach

After the presentation of the study carried out in partnership with Boston College, which pointed out that most domestic workers in Massachusetts are unaware of the law that protects their rights, the Brazilian Worker Center initiated some actions to increase knowledge on this subject.

- Translation into Portuguese and Spanish: The multilingual text will make it easier for interested organizations to share the result with workers and for people to access their own language.
- The BWC will intensify rights outreach in workshops in public spaces once the pandemic is under control and in-person events are permitted.
- Special Podcast: The BWC will also address the rights of domestic workers in their new podcast to raise awareness for both workers and employers.



Podcast is a new channel to talk to the community

One of the novelties of the Brazilian Worker Center in 2023 is the "BWC Podcast," launched in the last week of January. In partnership with the Brazilian Times newspaper, the podcast will be fortnightly, disseminate information, and provide services to the Brazilian community. The first episode, launched by our Executive Director, Lenita Reason, highlighted how the Driver's License law for immigrants in Massachusetts will be implemented.

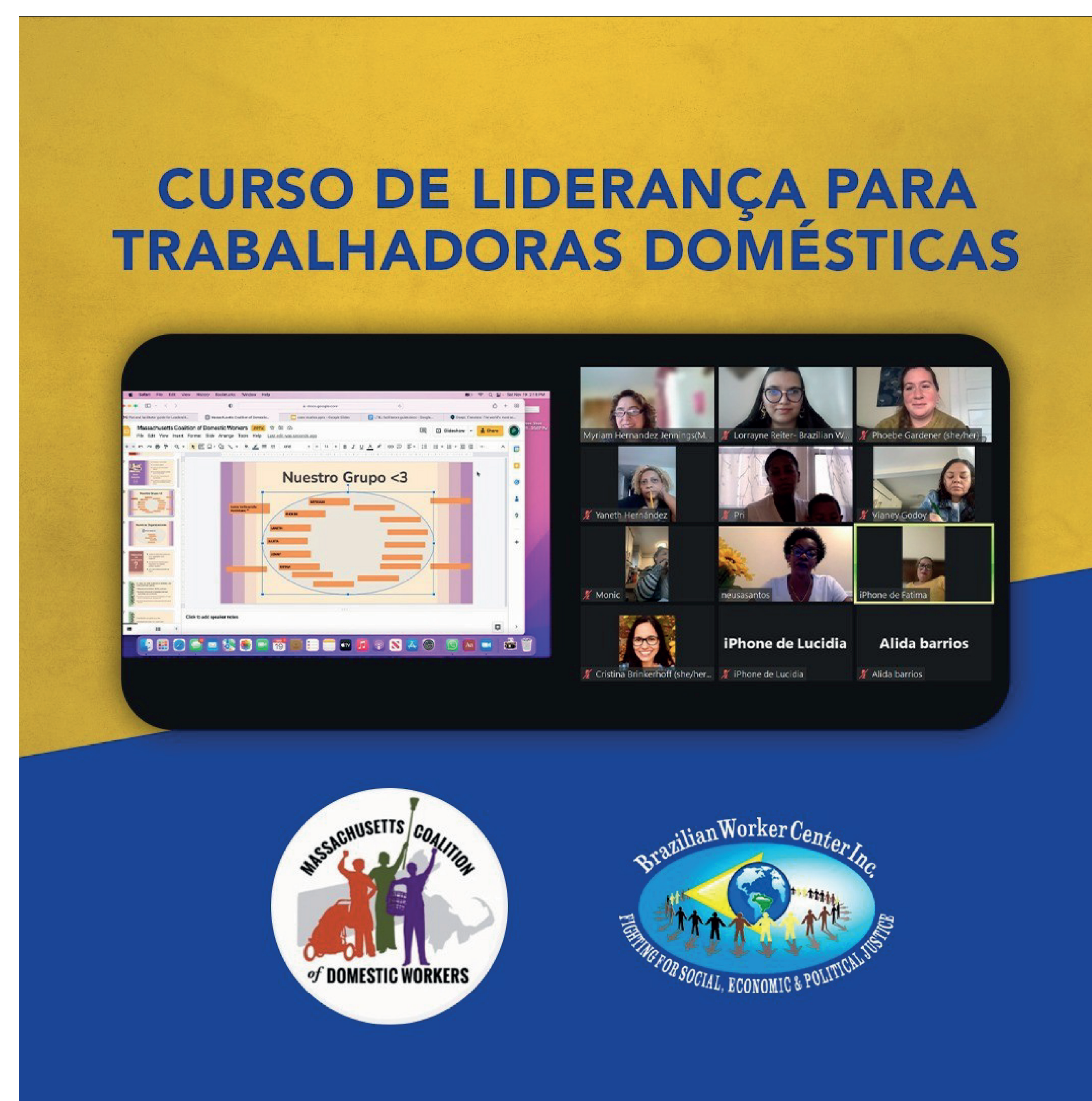
As co-chair of the coalition with 270 organizations that worked for the law's approval, she gave several details on how people can apply for the card starting on July 1st. The podcast premiere was presented by Alexandre Simões, with the participation of journalist Fabiano Ferreira and technical support from Gizele Bombardier, the BWC Manager.

The following episodes will focus on the activities of other departments of the Brazilian Worker Center. To follow along, subscribe to the BWC YouTube channel. To watch the first episode, click here:

WATCH NOW

Women's leadership training

On January 14th, the Brazilian Worker Center participated in the closing of the "Leadership Development Course for Domestic Workers," promoted by the Massachusetts Coalition of Domestic Workers (MCDW). The course began in November 2022 and had four sessions on topics such as the history of the Domestic Workers' Rights Law, which has been in force since 2015. Five domestic workers from the Brazilian community participated in the training representing the Brazilian Worker Center and will soon receive the certificates.



According to Lorraine Reiter, coordinator of the Domestic Workers' Rights Department at the BWC, who also participated in the training, the participants had the opportunity to discuss the challenges of day-to-day work and share suggestions for improvements for the category. This type of training values and empowers the women in our community and provides a cultural exchange among Latinos from different linguistic backgrounds.



Help fight human trafficking

The Brazilian Worker Center always supports causes in favor of immigrants and actions to protect their rights. In January, remembered as the Month to Combat Human Trafficking, we used our social networks to alert the community about this problem, which, unfortunately, is more common than you might think. The BWC has provided assistance to individuals who were victims of human trafficking cases. Last month, the government released relevant information on how to combat human trafficking through the Blue Campaign, which also included information about how to use reporting channels.

If you are a victim or know someone in this situation, report it: at 1-866-347-2423 or visit www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign



MEET OUR STAFF

Lenita Reason Executive Director

We are excited to introduce the members of the Brazilian Worker Center to our community. The first BWC staff that we would like to present is Lenita Reason, BWC Executive Director.

Lenita assumed this role in September 2021, after more than 12 years as a community organizer, office manager, and outreach coordinator for OSHA-funded workplace health and safety training at BWC.

Her professional background brings several experiences, from being a domestic worker, dental assistant, and office administrator in Brazil to acting as a private personal care attendant in the United States. She has served as an outreach specialist and training assistant for the Residential Construction Fall Protection Program and as a Portuguese interpreter for the City of Boston's Office of Language Access and Communication.

In her trajectory, she accumulates experience as a defender of Labor Rights in the Small Claims Court and mediator in disputes between workers and employers. In 2018, Lenita received the Certificate in Labor Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Boston

She has actively contributed as a coordinator of several projects. Among these projects are the 2014 study, funded by the Sociological Initiatives Foundation, which aimed to investigate the working conditions of domestic workers in Massachusetts, and Home Economics: The Invisible and Unregulated World of Domestic Work. This participatory research project supported the completion of the study by the National Alliance of Domestic Workers in 2013.

Lenita also collaborated on research investigating health awareness in the Brazilian immigrant community in Massachusetts in a study developed in partnership with UMass Boston, Tufts, Boston University, and Dana Farber Cancer Institute.

In 2014, she co-founded and has since co-chaired the BWC Workers' Building Justice Committee, which monitors and takes action on wage theft cases in the community.

2021, Lenita became co-chair of the Driving Families Forward coalition, which advocated for the passage of the Work and Family Mobility Act bill in Massachusetts.

JANUARY IN MOMENTS

Meeting to discuss BWC projects and actions for this year. Topics addressed: implementation of the Driver's License, Wage Theft, and Workplace Accidents



BWC Executive Director, Lenita Reason, and the Office and Finance Manager, Gizele Bombardier, at **"The State of the City"**, event promoted by the City of Boston.

BWC team in an **English class** given by **volunteer ESOL teacher Andy Nash**.



DONATION

Ways to give