



The Boss Can't Do That, Can He?

A Workers' Rights Curriculum



UMass Labor Extension Program
Amherst • Boston • Dartmouth • Lowell

“THE BOSS CAN’T DO THAT, CAN HE?” A Workers’ Rights Curriculum

Authors and Acknowledgements



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FACILITATORS INTRODUCTION

Workers Rights Curriculum

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF CURRICULUM

- This curriculum has been designed to be used either as a 2 day complete training, as a series over a number of weeks, or as stand alone modules on each topic.
- If more than one module is being done, a preferred order of topics is suggested below.

LEARNERS

The curriculum is appropriate for all workers unfamiliar with their workplace rights, especially:

- New entrants to the workforce, or re-joining the workforce
- Young workers
- Immigrant workers – both documented and undocumented

If doing the curriculum for union members, point out that their union contract may provide them with more rights than the laws.

IMMIGRANT WORKERS

Each module makes a reference to the rights of immigrant workers, both documented and undocumented. Included in the *Appendix* are two handouts - *Partial List of Advocacy Organizations* [please add resources in your region as appropriate] and *Safe and Unsafe Agencies for Immigrant Workers*. These handouts are part of Module 1. If you do not do Module 1, give these handouts to participants at the end of the first module you do. Refer to these handouts in subsequent modules. A list of government agencies is also included in appendix. We recommend that immigrant workers, especially undocumented, work with an advocacy organization on their problems.

LITERACY LEVEL OF PARTICIPANTS

- Some level of literacy in English is necessary to participate in the curriculum.
- Pictures have been included for use as complements to or in place of certain written scenarios/case studies.
- Some tips for participants with lower literacy levels:
 1. Use pictures as much as possible
 2. Ask for volunteers to read case studies, handouts & flip charts aloud

PREPARATION

- Follow the preparation instructions at the beginning of every module, including preparing flip charts and copying handouts. Sample flipcharts and handouts are at the end of each module outline. The pictures and “In Brief” sections, which are used in many modules, can be found in the appendix.

- Read the resource materials to familiarize yourself with the topic. Each module relies upon the facilitator having read the appropriate chapter and “In Brief” section of *Your Rights on the Job*, by Bob Schwartz. This book can be ordered from The Labor Guild at 617/786-1822.
- Familiarize yourself with information provided in the “mini-raps”. We have suggested wording for both the “mini-raps” and the summary. You may use your own words, but please include all the information provided. It can be helpful to list key points on a flipchart.
- Go over the curriculum with your participants in mind and prepare necessary adaptations prior to the training session. Like any workshop, this one will work best if it is modified to fit the needs and experience of participants. You may choose to substitute examples from the group for the provided case studies.

INTRODUCTIONS AND ICEBREAKERS

- If participants don’t already know each other, start the first session with introductions, asking participants to give their name, school, union, organization and/or workplace. Repeat the introductions at the beginning of subsequent sessions if the participants have not all learned each other’s names.
- Each module begins with an interactive activity. If doing a full day session, a suggested warm-up to open the session is included in the appendix.
- We suggest that you post an “in other words” or “jargon buster” flipchart and encourage participants to ask if they do not know the meaning of a word or expression.

FORMAT & MATERIALS

- Facilitators Outline provides a Module outline on the left side of each page, with title of activity, times, handouts and flipcharts needed for each activity. The right side of page provides detailed instructions for each activity.
- White copies of participants outline, all handouts and evaluation forms are included in curriculum for copying purposes
- Copy each of the following in different colors:
 - ⇒ Participants outline
 - ⇒ Handouts
 - ⇒ Feedback forms

PARTICIPATION FEEDBACK

- Oral and written evaluation by participants should be done at the end of each session, which may include more than one module. Please allow an extra 10 minutes to complete the evaluations. A sample of feedback format is included in appendix.

**Suggested order of modules and time required for each:
Add 10 minutes for evaluation at end of each session**

MODULE 1: Introduction to Workers Basic Legal Protections on the Job	75-90 minutes
MODULE 2: Beginning Employment: Your Pay and Your Paycheck	90 minutes
MODULE 3: Rights of Workers Under 18	60 minutes
MODULE 4: Overtime	60 minutes
MODULE 5: Protection from Discrimination	90 minutes
MODULE 6: Health and Safety Protection and Workers Compensation	90 minutes
MODULE 7: Family and Medical Leave	60 minutes
MODULE 8: Unemployment Insurance	45 minutes
MODULE 9: Unions and the Right to Organize	120 minutes
MODULE 10: Temporary and Day Laborers	130-145 minutes

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The Labor Extension Program at the University of Massachusetts is a regionally based, state wide effort to provide training and education to workers, their unions, and other workers' organizations. The focus of the program is on strengthening these organizations, increasing activism, and building the skills necessary to effectively advocate for the needs and concerns of the workforce.

The Labor Extension Program helps unions and other worker organizations to fully and effectively represent an increasingly diverse membership, to train a new generation of union leaders to face the challenges of the future, and to prepare all workers, organized and unorganized to exercise their full rights in the work place and the community.

Visit our website at: <http://umasslep.prometheuslabor.com/>

For further information contact the extension coordinator in your area:

Amherst

Clare Hammonds
Labor Center, Thompson Hall
200 Hicks Way
UMass Amherst
Amherst, MA 01003-9277
413-545-6166
chammonds@soc.umass.edu

Boston

Anneta Argyres
Labor Resource Center
Wheatley Building
100 Morrissey Blvd
Boston, MA 02125
617-287-7352
anneta.argyres@umb.edu

Dartmouth

Kim Wilson Venancio
UMass Dartmouth
Dubin Labor Education Center
285 Old Westport Rd.
N. Dartmouth, MA 02747
508-999-8781
kwilson@umassd.edu

Lowell

Susan Winning
UMass Lowell
Labor Education Program
600 Suffolk St. Suite 503
Lowell, MA 01854
978-934-3127
susan_winning@uml.edu