



# MAKE THE ROAD CONNECTICUT 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



# SI SE PUEDE



# A WORD FROM OUR DIRECTOR



As I write this my mind is occupied with thoughts of my new baby who is only in his 4th day of daycare. I have been on maternity leave for the past 4 months, the longest amount of time I have been away from Make the Road CT (MRCT) since I started with the organization in 2015. In my first few days back, when not trying to rid my inbox of the 5000 emails that had accumulated, I have been able to take some time to witness the strength, the consistency, the confidence, the intentionality and the leadership that our staff and members have exhibited, allowing MRCT to flourish in my time away. I am grateful for everyone who has passed through and continues to pour their labor, spirit and love to make our foundation strong.



MRCT is an organization founded on the premise that Black, brown, immigrant, Latine, working-class, and poor people have power and, when organized, can wield that power to change the policies and systems that are oppressing them. 2023, was a year that showed how all the work we have done in previous years to build that power can lead to significant victories for our community. In 2018, we opened our Hartford office because our years of organizing on the local level in Bridgeport showed us that some issues need to be addressed at the state level. We joined coalition spaces, such as the Connecticut Immigrant Rights Alliance, pushing for statewide policy like the TRUST Act, but did not lead any campaigns ourselves. That began to change as we gained a better understanding of what organizing at the state level looked like and grew our staff team to increase our capacity.



This led to the first statewide victory that we were a core supporter of, the Husky for Immigrants Campaign, which expanded healthcare access to children, pregnant people, and for those that give birth, until 1 year after pregnancy. Fast forward to 2023 and we led a statewide campaign and were a core part of 2 others that led to an expansion of Husky to include older children, 14 and under, and the passage of a Bilingual Education Bill of Rights (read more about these victories in the rest of our report). In order to win these campaigns, we built coalitions, engaged new allies, and tried out new strategies, while continuing to make space for our members to authentically lead. We will continue to leverage this power in 2024 and beyond as we fight for healthcare for everyone regardless of status, protections for tenants from no-cause evictions, and expanding the right to vote to include non-citizens.



This latest campaign, the right to vote for non-citizens, came directly from our members and leaders identifying civic engagement and participation as a necessary strategy to achieve the change we want to see. I was so proud to see our Leaders Council being the driving force behind our increased civic engagement activities these past few years and I am excited to see one of our committees take this campaign on. We are looking forward to continuing to follow in our leaders' footsteps as they identify new ways for us to grow and develop as an organization and as a movement. Si Se Puede!

In Solidarity,  
Barbara Lopez

*Barbara Lopez*



# WHO WE ARE



## OUR MISSION

Make the Road Connecticut (MRCT) is an intergenerational member-led community-based organization working to build power in immigrant, Latine, and working-class communities in Connecticut to achieve dignity and justice. We do this through community organizing, legal and survival services, transformative education, and policy innovation.

## OUR VISION

MRCT envisions communities where Black, Brown, immigrant, indigenous, and working-class people are treated with dignity and respect and have equitable access to housing, healthcare, education, and other systems and resources. We see children playing, neighbors sharing food, dancing, laughing, being healthy, and building strong connections to not just live but to thrive. We trust the power of organizing and fighting back against inequities, sexism, institutional racism, and all the other isms that exist in our society to deliver the changes and build the new systems our community needs.

In 2023, my most significant achievement was the inauguration of the People's Mansion. We dedicated immense effort to ensure the house was aesthetically pleasing, well-furnished, and fully prepared for the community to utilize for various purposes such as meetings, events, health fairs, youth gatherings, fundraisers, and community engagement. Witnessing the presence of community members, funders, and elected officials during the grand opening of this community hub was a truly gratifying experience.

**- Keyla Medina, Senior Operations & Special Programs Manager**



# A LOOK BACK AT 2023

## The People's Convention

In July, dozens of affiliates of the Center for Popular Democracy gathered in Philadelphia for the bi-annual People's Convention. Over 50 members joined us in attending workshops about organizing and power-building on issues surrounding economic, racial, and gender justice, and marching through the streets of Philadelphia to fight for safe, quality, affordable housing for all.



## Expansion of Housing Justice Work

In 2020 our members identified housing as issue area they wanted Make the Road to get involved in. Ever since we have seen more and more community members reach out to us looking for ways they can organize for better living conditions. We were excited this year to be able to expand our housing work and hire our first housing organizer in Bridgeport, Giselle who will join our Hartford Housing Organizer, Teresa, in fighting for tenant rights in Hartford, Bridgeport, and across the state.

## Membership Assembly

Over 50 members from Hartford and Bridgeport gathered in our new Hartford office space for our membership assembly in October. Member leaders facilitated activities and presented the highlights of our powerful work in 2023, built a tree together that showcased our collective power, and took time to relax and dance some Zumba. It was beautiful to see the power of our members in a space they took a lot of ownership in curating.

## Community Health Fair

We hosted our first Community Health Fair at our Bridgeport Office in May. Over 40 community members joined us for blood pressure, glucose, and HIV tests, dental health information, SNAP application support, and more health resources. This was the first of many events that we will be hosting thanks to our community health workers who joined our team late last year.



## Tenant Organizing

Dozens of tenant leaders showed up at a City Council meeting in mid-December to address the ways the city of Hartford has failed to support tenants living in buildings owned by slumlords. This included buildings that do not have sufficient heating for the cold winter months. This is the second time we have gone to City Council, the first time being in 2022, and we will keep showing up until the city is consistently holding slumlords accountable.



## Husky Campaign Victory

For a third year in a row we successfully increased access to the state health insurance program, Husky, for young people regardless of their immigration status. We passed a law that raised the age of children that qualified from 12 to 14. One of the most powerful moments of the campaign was our campaign launch where we filled a room in the Legislative Office Building with hundreds of supporters. Moving forward, we will continue fighting until everyone in CT has access to the health care that they deserve.

## Passage of Bilingual Education Bill of Rights

We had a few legislative victories this year, one of which being the passage of a Bilingual Parent Bill of Rights. This law reaffirms the services and supports that school districts are required to provide for families and students that do not speak English fluently and strengthens our ability to hold districts accountable when they fall short. The governor officially signed the bill at our office in July.



## Annual Fundraiser

There were many firsts happening at our new home in Bridgeport this year, one of which was the first fundraiser held there. Over 75 people gathered for our annual fundraiser where we honored member leaders that had a great impact on the organization and collectively raised over \$33,000. We learned the hard way that holding events in your own space can be more work but we are so glad that community members got to see our new home.



## May Day 2023

Over 100 community members from MRCT and several of our allies rallied at the State Capitol for International Workers Day, also known as May Day, on May 1st. Speakers spoke about the legislative campaigns we were running for the year including expanding access to Husky health insurance, passing a Bilingual Parent Bill of Rights, and caps on the amount a landlord can raise the rent. We would end up winning two of these campaigns just a month later thanks to our collective power.

## New Office Space/ Ribbon Cutting

2023 saw us continue to grow and develop the physical spaces where much of our work happens. We moved to a new office space in Hartford, located at 885 Wethersfield Avenue, that we share with the union 32BJ, one of our allies. We also continued to make improvements to the mansion we purchased last year that serves as our organizing hub in Bridgeport and had a ribbon cutting ceremony to officially open the space to the public. The ceremony was attended by members, allies, and local and state elected officials.



# 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

500

TOTAL MEMBERS ENGAGED IN CAMPAIGN WORK

50+

PUBLIC EVENTS HOSTED

100

MEMBERS TRAINED IN LEADERSHIP & ORGANIZING SKILLS

100

MEMBERS SCREENED OR REFERRED TO IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICES

600

MEMBERS SERVED BY OUR COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAMS

2

NEW LAWS PASSED



# HEALTH EQUITY



"[This campaign] is important to me because I fundamentally believe in the right to health. It is something that impacts everyone, it does not matter your immigration status. Everyone gets sick and it is essential to have access to be able to take care of your health when it is bad. One hope I have is to continue growing our group and to see changes in the health system."

-Flor Espino

HFD Fightback Committee Leader

## What We Believe

We believe that every resident of Connecticut, regardless of race, immigration status, class, or insurance status has a right to quality healthcare. We believe that this healthcare should be culturally informed, multilingual, and should put people over profit.

## Our Organizing Work

Our local campaigns in Hartford and Bridgeport continued to focus on getting **improved services at hospitals and clinics including quality interpretation, transparency around medical costs, easily accessible information about payment options and financial aid available, and more information about services offered.** In Hartford we were able to pass a resolution at City Council focused on having the Health Department be more engaged in making sure quality care is available. In both cities we had several meetings with hospital and clinic executives, sharing the powerful stories of our members and giving examples of how the system needs to improve. **We will continue demanding transparency and pushing for a patient's right to healthcare within all health facilities in Hartford and Bridgeport.**

Building on wins in 2021 and 2022, **we continued to expand access to Husky Medicaid insurance in 2023 with the program now set to include all children 14 and under, up from 12 the previous year.** While we are frustrated with the incremental approach the legislature is taking, we know this expansion will impact thousands of young people who will now have access to health insurance. Olga Gutierrez was one of dozens of members that testified at the public hearing in support of expanding Husky and said "If we want Connecticut to be a welcoming place for all, we cannot continue allowing our children and their families to not have the option to see a doctor and care for their health." We will continue to fight in 2024 to expand coverage to all.





## Our Programming Work

Throughout 2023 we continued to grow and expand our community health work. That work is led by our “Promotoras” or community health workers who joined our staff late in 2022 and have now been with MRCT for over a year! **We successfully hosted our first two health fairs of the year**, a general one in May and one specifically for women and girls in October. **These fairs were attended by over 100 community members and brought together dozens of health agencies in one place.** Hosting these kinds of events in our office space reduces the barriers to access for our members as they feel safe and comfortable with the location and know that people will be there who speak their language. These fairs also allowed us to build stronger relationships with clinics and community providers.

In addition to the large-scale community events, our community health workers **focused their energy on ensuring community members were aware of the resources available to them through both digital and in-person activities.** Our community health workers met with dozens of community members to support them in applying for Husky health insurance and walking them through other healthcare related processes. They ran digital campaigns related to vaccine education and created virtual and print materials for community members and healthcare providers to make sure both are clear about the rights community members have to receive quality care. These connections with healthcare providers, pharmacies, and clinics also ensures our members are aware of free and low-cost programs that they can take advantage of. **All in all, our community health workers connected with and supported almost 600 people.** This work stemmed from a survey we did of our members in 2020 asking what kind of service-related work they wanted us to provide. Navigating the healthcare system was high on that list and so we got to work building the programming we have today.



**"We need to continue the fight to implement more laws that protect our community. We are from here because we live here, work and contribute to the socio-economic development of the city and the state."**

**-Nely Mendoza**  
BPT Fightback Committee  
Leader



My proudest moment from 2023 is putting our values into practice through building collective spaces where we can truly take care of our health. This includes doing yoga sessions, Zumba in the park, hosting a friendsgiving space and many other convivencias. This is my proudest moment because immigrant health is precious and moments to pause are rare but vital to continue to build a sustainable grassroots movement.

**- Brighth Rivera, Hartford Community Organizer**

[My proudest moment from 2023 is] being able to participate in many different events as well as being involved in the community as a supporter. One of the best moments would be participating in DominGo's summer event as we had gathered more than 30 contacts interested in learning more about Make the Road as well as connecting with many different health clinics and organizations.

**- Aileen Suarez, Community Health Worker**



# HOUSING JUSTICE



"Make The Road has had a positive impact on the community because they support all of us to build power, and fight together. [Together we] have gotten more Spanish speaking housing inspectors in Hartford, and funds for free legal aid in areas that didn't have it. [We will continue] to raise our voices and fight for dignified housing"

-Victoria Ramos  
Tenant Leader

## What We Believe

*We believe that everyone deserves a safe, quality, affordable place to live and thrive in the location that they choose. Ultimately, we believe housing is a human right, tenants should have strong protections against slumlords, and housing should be accessible to all, regardless of immigration status.*

## Our Organizing Work

2023 saw the continued deepening and expansion of our housing work. We started off the year fighting alongside our allies to pass a cap on rent at the state level. While the policy ultimately did not pass, dozens of our members got to speak publicly about the housing conditions they are experiencing and demand changes. **Throughout the year, our Entre Vecinos housing committee met weekly and built a space led by tenants that focused on leadership development, popular education, and healing.** Members and staff were able to take trips to North Carolina and Houston to learn from other community groups doing housing organizing and display the collective power we have. These trips were part of a big national campaign that we are a part of, the House Everyone Campaign. **This national campaign is pushing for green, tenant controlled social housing on a nationwide scale.** The campaign also created a space, called Renters Rising, that we were able to participate in with members of our community. This space includes nationwide member meetings, workshops focused on building collective knowledge, and big collective actions.

Locally in Hartford, the **Wethersfield Tenant Union held a public action attended by over 75 people at their apartment complex to highlight the deplorable conditions they are living in and the lack of response from the landlord.** This led to a second action at Hartford City Council in December where some tenants talked about having urgent problems such as no heat in their apartments. Tenant leaders are working with our allies and some city council members to push the city to respond faster to complaints made by tenants and to come down harder on landlords that are not doing their job. **We also hired our new housing organizer for Bridgeport, Giselle, who will be gearing up for similar local campaigns in 2024.**



# YOUTH POWER



"One dream that I have for the future of youth work at Make the Road, is that we work hard enough, and recruit as many youth and as much support as possible to finally see permanent changes in our education, which is what students in Bridgeport and other places need."

**-Arantza Gonzalez**  
Youth Power Committee Leader

## What We Believe

*We believe that young people should have power and agency over the institutions that impact their lives. We believe young people know what is best for their schools and their communities and should be given the tools and resources to ensure these institutions are giving them what they need to learn and grow.*

## Our Organizing Work

2023 saw the hiring of two new youth-focused staff, Emily our Youth Organizer, and Daniel our Youth Coordinator. Both of them have been focused on strengthening our Youth Power Committee (YPC) and planning for campaigns that will launch in 2024. **Since Emily and Daniel started they have more than doubled the size of the Youth Power Committee, with several new young people joining.** They also launched a new popular education series called Lessons of Liberation where youth leaders are learning the meaning of oppression, liberation, and how different issues connect to their lives. The youth are also excited to be **designing their own space within the People's Mansion and have been working on a mural alongside a local artist based in Bridgeport, and making the room feel like their home to organize and build power from.**

The YPC has also been gathering the information and resources they need to **launch their campaign for a NextGen Success Hub at one High School in the city of Bridgeport.** This NextGen Success Hub will be a space where young people can get support with figuring out their post-high school plans such as college readiness and career planning. **The space will be co-run by young people supporting each other and designing a space that feels welcoming and inclusive of all students.** In order to promote the YPC in feeling ownership over this work we are experimenting with a sub-committee structure that will encourage youth leadership and allow young people to use their strengths and engage in work they are most interested in. Through this process YPC members will gain skills and experience that they can take with them into their future studies and careers.



# EDUCATION EQUITY



"The ELL Parent Bill of Rights is a very important campaign for me since having qualified interpretation and translation in schools allows us to be more involved in our children's education without being afraid to ask for help. The most important thing about this law is that many families will not have the negative experiences that some parents had in the past. I know there is still a lot to do, but I also know that we have taken a big step."

**-Mayra Nava**  
Madres en Acción Parent Leader

## What We Believe

We believe that every student deserves a quality education and that all parents and family members regardless of race, class, immigration status, or language spoken *should be able to fully participate in that education.* We believe educational resources should be equitably distributed and the *stories and experiences of those historically left out or targeted should be centered.*

## Our Organizing Work

One of our biggest victories in 2023 was **winning our state-level campaign pushing for the passage of a Bilingual Education Bill of Rights.** In order to build the power we needed to win, we formed a coalition, the ELL Parent and Student Success Coalition, made up of several allied groups. **We built so much power that even the Governor joined us in pushing for the passage of the bill. Ultimately, the bill passed.** The bill included language affirming the right of parents to enroll students in school without being asked about immigration status, the right for parents and families to have a qualified interpreter for important school interactions, and the right of parents and family to receive an orientation about the English language learner resources provided by the district. To make sure the new law is implemented fully, **we are working with the State Department of Education to ensure districts are providing the services that students and families are entitled to.** We had a meeting with them in December about what implementation would look like, which resulted in a document that will be circulated to all districts laying out what services and supports they are required to provide. We will continue to work on further implementation steps in 2024.

In Bridgeport, **Madres en Acción is fighting for education equity and justice that will provide avenues for greater parental participation.** In order to achieve this, we first researched how to create policies that would allow all parents of Bridgeport Public Schools to elect members of the school board regardless of immigration status. Through that process we found allies (other organizations and elected officials), and began forming a coalition. Looking ahead, during the 2024 legislative session, **we plan to launch a new campaign at the state level to seek "The Right to Vote" for all CT residents regardless of immigration status.**



Madres Guerreras forged ahead in their language justice campaign which entails holding Hartford Public Schools (HPS) accountable for providing quality interpretation, translation, and other language services. **Our members met with the Chief Engagement and Partnerships Officer 6 times and established a clear action plan to improve existing translation and interpretation services.** Parents won explicit assurance that they would be systematically informed of their right to receive documents in their preferred language. Parents also won explicit assurance that school staff who interpret will be trained in order to better serve families. In effect, the local membership in the Hartford area anticipated the statewide bill of rights and pushed Hartford to get a head start on defining higher standards of language access and implementing those standards. Membership also met with the HPS superintendent and presented at the Hartford Board of Education in order to continue to investigate current language access policies and objectives for the future.



The moments I was most proud of in my work were when the tenant leaders I work with used their powerful voices to win change for themselves and their community. I am proud of the tenants who organized in Wethersfield and got some justice in housing court after going on a rent strike, the members of my committee giving interviews telling their powerful stories during the legislative session and our May Day event, speaking fearlessly and unapologetically, and my Hartford community who united to raise their powerful voices to complain in a city council meeting on December 11 to bring their demands and advocate for housing justice.

**- Teresa Quintana, Hartford Housing Equity Organizer**



It was June 7, after 11:00 pm, and our hopes were fading. There was only one hour left until the 2023 legislative session ended. It had been a long day with many discussions to approve bill 6762, but the vote had not come. Finally, the moment we had waited for and worked so hard for became a reality. The ELL Parents Bill of Rights was voted for by a complete majority of the Education Committee of the Legislative Assembly. It was the moment that filled me with the most pride, seeing the faces of the parents/families, the joy of my colleagues, and the hope for a better education for the entire community. It is what has made me most proud!

**-Helen Quiñonez, Bridgeport Community Organizer**

# IMMIGRANT JUSTICE



In the process of working with the Youth Power Committee, I hope to encourage the Youth Leaders to believe in their ability to create change in their communities. I think that half of my work as Youth Organizer is affirming to the youth that their opinions, experiences, and futures matter, despite the fact that there continue to be many barriers set in front of them. After all, making change in your community is not necessarily something taught in schools, and many people grow up never truly believing that making change is possible. That is the greatest challenge for me, but I believe that this work will help the youth embrace the process of making change and help them find confidence in their own voice.

**- Emily Romero  
Youth Organizer**

## What We Believe

*Make the Road CT believes that every person, regardless of their immigration status, should have the freedom to move, which includes the right to seek refuge abroad, and the freedom to thrive wherever they choose to live.*

## Our Organizing Work

All of our organizing work centers around building power for and ensuring just, livable and dignified communities for black and brown, immigrant and working class people. One way we complement that organizing work is through providing legal and survival services that our members deems is important. We are currently working to build out some of those services and programming, especially in the areas of healthcare access and legal support. In the meantime, we continue to screen and provide legal referrals to individuals and families who are in deportation proceedings or who have recently crossed the border. **In 2023, we referred over 65 community members to pro-bono and low-bono immigration attorneys and hosted a legal clinic where over 35 community members were screened for immigration benefits.** We also support community members by providing accompaniment to immigration court and ICE check ins.

**On a federal level, we have been advocating for solutions to an unjust and broken immigration system.** We have been coordinating with other CT-based immigrant rights and workers rights organizations to pressure our federal elected officials to push for progressive, pro-immigrant legislation and not negotiate away our community's right to move across borders.



# COMMUNICATION & DIGITAL REPORT: ENHANCING OUTREACH & IMPACT



## 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

87%

INCREASE IN MEDIA  
ATTENTION

75+

NEWS ARTICLES  
WRITTEN ABOUT OR  
REFERENCING OUR WORK

40+

FEATURES IN LIVE NEWS  
REPORTS

60%

INCREASE IN SOCIAL  
MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

During our strategic planning three years ago, our staff and members identified a need for more resources to be dedicated to getting our message out to a wider audience and amplifying our work in news media and digital spaces. This led to us bringing on a Communications and Digital Associate. Since doing that, our organization has witnessed a remarkable transformation in our communication strategies and digital presence.

Previously, our events would often go unnoticed, with minimal media coverage and limited outreach. However, with the **dedicated efforts of our Communications & Digital Associate, our events have received a significant increase of 87% in media attention.** This shift highlights the tangible impact of strategic communication planning and digital engagement on our organization's visibility and reach within the community.

Amplifying our work through effective communication channels is crucial in today's world. It serves as a powerful tool to pressure elected officials, raise awareness about important issues, and mobilize support for our cause. By strategically leveraging various platforms and engaging with diverse audiences, we can maximize our influence and drive meaningful change in our community. **Whether it's through compelling narratives, data-driven advocacy, or impactful social media campaigns, amplifying our work enables us to reach broader audiences, build coalitions, and advance our mission more effectively.**

In addition to increasing media coverage and outreach, our organization has also **experienced significant growth across our social media platforms. Over the past two years, our engagement metrics, followers counts and website traffic have all seen substantial increases.** Thanks to this we have been able to connect with more supporters, share impactful stories, and inspire action. This growth not only reflects the effectiveness of our communication strategies but also underscores the growing interest and support for our work. By harnessing the power of digital platforms, we have been able to connect with a wider audience, share our message more effectively, and mobilize action towards positive change.

Through strategic communication efforts and digital engagement, we continue to amplify our impact, elevate our visibility and drive meaningful progress towards our organizational goals. **As we look ahead, we remain committed to leveraging innovative communication strategies and harnessing the full potential of digital platforms to advance our mission and create a brighter future for all.**

# WHAT IS A MOMENT IN 2023 WHEN YOU FELT POWERFUL OR IN COMMUNITY?

“On our trip to Philadelphia, listening to my colleagues and giving my testimony in front of other organizations!”

-Ruth

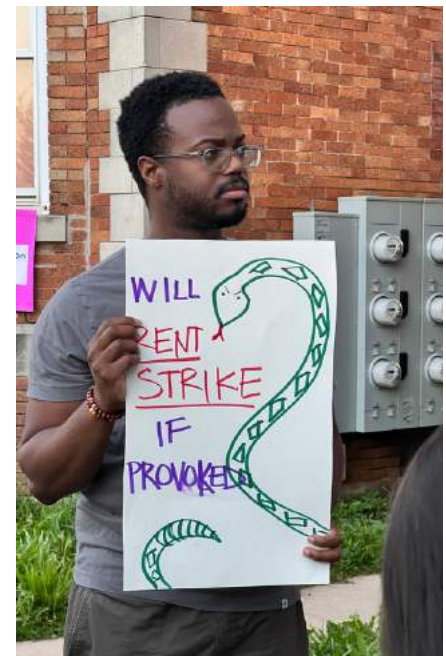


“During 2023 there were many moments when I felt powerful. I supported every step we took to present the Parent Bill of Rights. It made me feel so powerful.”

-Mayra

“A moment in 2023 where I felt in community with other members was when we had our general assembly in Hartford, because I got to see all of the members working together and having a good time with each other, which was really memorable for me and made me hope that we get to work and share wonderful moments with each other more.”

-Arantza



A moment that I felt powerful was when I had my first conversation with my organizer, I had just arrived in the country and it was one of the first times I felt protected and full of hope.

-Flor



“I felt powerful when I spoke in public and spoke truth to the faces of the oppressors in our community.”

-Victoria





# MEET OUR STAFF TEAM

2023 was a year of growth of our staff team both in terms of numbers and culture. We welcomed five new staff members, four of them members of our organizing team (housing organizer in Bridgeport, education organizer in Hartford, and youth organizer and coordinator in Bridgeport), bringing our total number of organizers up to 8, and one new community health worker, bringing our whole staff team up to 17 people. Beyond the numbers, we also had intentional conversations about staff culture. We had an entire day dedicated to working through second-hand trauma that can come up in our work and had conversations about how to better include staff in decision-making processes. **We are excited to move into 2024 continuing these conversations and navigating whatever new challenges and opportunities may come up together alongside our members.**

Staff Members from left to to right:

[top row] Barbara López - Executive Director, Wendy Cárdenas - Organizing Director, Mary Elizabeth (M.E.) Smith - Development & Programs Director

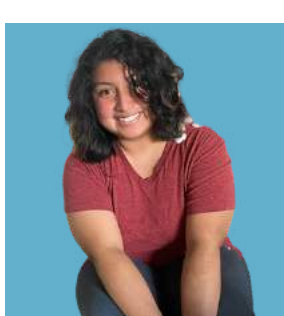
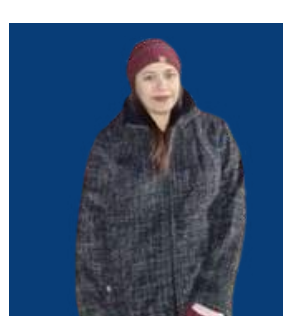
[2nd Row] Sonia Hernandez - Bridgeport Fightback Organizer, Teresa Quintana - Hartford Housing Equity Organizer, Sara Swetzoff - Hartford Community Organizer

[3rd Row] Helen Quiñonez - Bridgeport Community Organizer, Giselle Chavez, Bridgeport Housing Equity Organizer, Brighth Rivera - Hartford Community Organizer

[4th Row] Emily Romero - Youth Organizer, Daniel De Jesus - Youth Coordinator, Marlis Prieto - Communications & Digital Associate

[5th Row], Keyla Medina - Senior Operations & Special Project Manager, Stefan Keller - Senior Development Manager, Leida Ramos - Office Maintainer

[Bottom Row] - Yorelys Cardenas - Promotora, Aileen Suarez - Promotora





## Education Equity

- **State Level** - Advocating for a thorough implementation of the new ELL/Bilingual Parent Bill of Rights that incorporates detailed guidance on standards of translation and interpretation, through a series of meetings with the State Department of Education and mobilizing members to testify at the State Board of Education meetings. Working to introduce a new Right to Vote policy in collaboration with a statewide coalition of organizations to expand who is eligible to vote in local and state elections to include non-citizens.
- **Local Level** - Pushing for the local implementation of parents' language rights in Hartford, and working to educate parents about special education and mental health services.



## Housing Justice

- **Federal Level** - Working in coalition with groups from around the country to win the House Everyone Campaign which will provide a massive investment in Green Social Housing. This will allow millions of people around the country to have control over their own housing.
- **State Level** - Passing an expansion of the Just Cause law that makes it so landlords cannot just evict a tenant for no reason or because a lease ended. Too many tenants in our community have been evicted when their lease was up, because they were never given a lease, or because they began organizing for better conditions and lost the place they called home. Other states that have passed his type of law saw a significant reduction in evictions and we are fighting to see the same reductions here in CT.
- **Local Level** - Building tenant unions and taking direct actions against corporate landlords that allow their tenants to live in deplorable conditions and demanding city governments take steps to protect tenants and hold landlords accountable.



## Healthcare Access

- **State Level** - Expanding access to Husky health insurance to everyone regardless of immigration status (currently just children under 15, those that are pregnant, and one year postpartum) . Particularly for 2024, we want to expand coverage beyond age 18 while also focusing on building people power to gain greater legislative wins. We also will be supporting the implementation plan for the upcoming expansion of Husky that will begin on July 1st.
- **Local level** - Working with hospitals and clinics to set a standard of care for all patients that includes access to quality translation, interpretation, treatment with dignity and respect, and access to information patients need to make informed medical decisions, and create regular spaces for community members to give feedback and co-create solutions. We also will be working to ensure transparency from hospitals and clinics with their reporting.

## Worker Justice

- **State Level** - Continue to work towards worker justice through supporting campaigns for expanding paid sick days to cover all workers regardless of employer size or industry and predictive scheduling to ensure all workers are able to work a fair work week with a schedule they know in advance
- **Local Level** - Develop a workers committee that will address issues impacting workers including informing workers of their rights, providing training such as OSHA to help workers build their skills, and launching a worker-led campaign. We will also continue to collaborate with the Worker and Immigrant Rights Law Clinic at Yale Law School on creating a train the trainers for our staff on worker rights and wage and labor laws.

## Youth Power

- **Local Level** - Launch a campaign to create a NextGen Success Hub housed in a Bridgeport Public High School that will be co-led by youth and the Youth Coordinator, with the aim of supporting students with post-high school planning, and offering leadership and skill-building opportunities.

## Community Health

- Expand our member outreach to address the need in the community for Husky application support as well as education workshops on COVID, flu, and other vaccines.
- Conduct surveys and lead conversations with community members to understand barriers to accessing Medicaid and monitor challenges that our community has in accessing healthcare with an eye towards potential future policy changes to address these challenges
- Continue to build strong relationships with clinics and hospitals to help serve our members and community

## Immigrant Justice

- We have been alarmed by the recent rhetoric from the Biden Administration that has included border shutdowns and no mention of pathways to citizenship or other immigrant protections. In 2024, we will continue to raise our voices to oppose policies that endanger immigrants living in the United States now and those that are arriving at the border and push for policies that help create a just immigration system where everyone has the freedom to move or to stay wherever they want or need.



My proudest moment in 2023 with MRCT is being able to transition from being a member leader to staff. I am happy to have received this opportunity of growth. I have learned how to advocate for myself and others. I have learned different ways of contributing to the community. Now as staff it is a different experience to share with members, teaching them how to advocate for themselves and others. We need changes in our housing system, I am willing to give the community my all and together we will start making changes for the better of our community. We are humans and we have rights.

**-Giselle Chavez, Bridgeport Housing Equity Organizer**

# ENGAGE WITH US

## Make a Donation

By Mail:

Make the Road States Inc.  
Att: Make the Road CT  
301 Grove Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11237

Online:

[www.maketheroadct.org](http://www.maketheroadct.org)

## Get Involved

Want to host a fundraiser,  
join our accompaniment team,  
or support in another way?

Reach out to us at  
475-302-6022 or  
[info@maketheroadct.org](mailto:info@maketheroadct.org).

## Follow Us

Instagram, Facebook, &  
Twitter @MakeTheRoadCT

