

Tech Workers Coalition:

Infosheet

06/2017



We are united by our:

- Belief that democracy is necessary in all aspects of our lives, including at our workplaces where it's pretty much non-existent.
- Understanding that technology has the potential to be a democratizing force. This crucially depends on who controls technology. Technology isn't inherently good or bad!
- Conviction that we as workers can define what we value, organize and build a better world in solidarity with all workers, from the bottom up. We shouldn't let the folks in the corporate communications department dictate what we care about.
- Knowledge that we're stronger fighting together, across job functions and companies. We demonstrate **solidarity in action**.

Who we are:

The Tech Workers Coalition is a home for progressive tech workers in the Bay Area who want to get shit done. We're a democratically structured, **all-volunteer**, and **worker-led** organization. Our active participants include workers in the tech industry, members from labor union locals, community organizers, and friends. At this point, membership consists of attending meetings in person and working on the various projects that people are interested in. We organize online but IRL is the crux of what we do.

How we build our organization:

We started as a small group about two years ago with the purpose of being a point of connection between progressives in the Bay Area tech community and existing community members and organizations. We've continued to grow and evolve as more and more tech workers in the Bay Area (and beyond) look for ways to organize via their identities as workers.

A major endeavor that we are undertaking is our commitment to building [connections between workers on-site at their workplaces](#) ([#workplace_chapters](#)). This involves connecting co-workers that join us independently, and providing tools and support for TWCers to organize non-TWC people at their work. Workplace chapters allow workers to leverage their collective power in workplace-specific struggles, both for themselves and others in the community. Under the umbrella of the Tech Workers Coalition we can share strategies, report on our successes and failures, learn from each-other and organize across an atomized industry.

What we do:

Our biggest focus prior to fall 2016 was raising awareness of Silicon Valley's so-called [invisible workforce](#) — the thousands of subcontracted service workers (janitors, cooks, security officers, and others) who work at large tech campuses in Silicon Valley, but who lack livable wages, recognition, and a voice on the job. These **solidarity** struggles make tangible and urgent gains for our fellow workers. To be effective, we need to have our own organizations at the job, so we **build** these through these struggles. Working together on these initiatives help us understand how to get things done in cooperation at our workplaces, so we **learn** as we fight.

We continue to seek out ways to build power at our workplaces and make wins for workers.

Who we build with:

- Unions
- Workers Associations
- Community Members
- Activist organizations
- Political Organizations

What have we accomplished:

- **#seiu-security-efforts**: Members of TWC supported SEIU's efforts to unionize security officers at tech campuses. For obvious reasons, it's difficult for union organizers to get on campus to distribute literature, but it's protected activity for the tech workers to undertake. Tech workers in TWC met with security officers at their companies to help conduct surveys and spread the word about the union. Since the winter of '16 SEIU represents security officers at the five biggest security contractors in Silicon Valley.
- **#foodservice_organizin(g)**: TWC members are supporting UNITE HERE!'s efforts to unionize cafeteria workers across tech campuses. TWC worked with unions and Silicon Valley Rising to get companies to [agree](#) not to discipline workers who stayed home from work to participate in actions and marches on May Day. Tech workers in the coalition are encouraged to get to know their cafeteria workers – they feed you every day!
- **Palantir protest** - TWC organized a successful protest in downtown Palo Alto in front of Palantir headquarters. There was broad media coverage drawing attention to Palantir's business, and solid engagement with the community. Agitation continues at Palantir.
- **#proj-matchmaking**: Tech workers have some useful skills! We can share them, and have, with local activist and community organizations. This can be basic stuff like helping set up a database or more in depth engagement like building an app or website.
- **#fairhotels**: We are organizing around a hotel-worker project, [fairhotel.org](#). The goal of this is to get tech companies to patronize hotels where workers are treated fairly, have a voice on the job, and have decent wages and benefits. It is one way we can support good jobs in our community, and support hotel workers in their struggle for justice and respect.

- We've organized forums, protests, a May Day march, around these issues and others.

How we organize:

- Monthly general meetings with rotating facilitators
- Slack
- Forums
- Reading/study group
- Bi-weekly Newsletter
- [Workplace chapters survey](#)
- Voluntary organizing roles

How we learn:

- Trainings
 - We participate in both internal teach-ins from other members of the Tech Workers Coalition, as well as external trainings sponsored by other organizations.
- Activism
 - We are committed to on the ground struggles and on going projects. Our primary internal projects are #workplace-chapters and #tech_union. We also will organize in solidarity with our coworkers engaging in union struggles (e.g. SEIU janitor organizing, Unite Here! cafeteria worker organizing).
- Learning Groups
 - We have an internal group called #learning-club, where we focus on learning more from historical examples and trends.

TWC is constantly growing and evolving – we are currently working to document the democratic structures in our organization, if you have any questions on this or would like further details on anything mentioned above, please reach out via [email](#) or on [Slack](#)!