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### **STAFF AT EMPIRE JUSTICE CENTER ANNOUNCE THEIR INTENT TO UNIONIZE**

*Staff have amassed a supermajority of support and call on Empire Justice Center management to recognize the union and begin bargaining immediately*

Empire Justice Center attorneys, paralegals, and other staff announced their intent to join the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys - UAW Local 2325 on Monday, January 22, 2024. An overwhelming majority of staff have signed union cards, and now ask the Empire Justice Center leadership team to voluntarily recognize the union.

The staff's goals include fair pay and equal treatment; transparency, accountability, and equity in decision-making including hiring and discipline; opportunities and structures for staff training, mentorship, and professional growth; and an inclusive and accessible work environment for all.

Empire Justice Center's 360 degree approach to social justice change includes teaching the law by providing training and technical assistance to other advocate organizations; practicing the law by providing free, direct civil legal services and impact litigation; and changing the law by engaging in legislative and administrative advocacy on issues that affect underserved communities.

At the heart of it all are Empire Justice Center's staff members who commit daily to providing the highest quality legal help and resources to low-income New Yorkers across the State in a broad range of practice areas including housing, public benefits, immigration, Medicaid/Medicare, Social Security, domestic violence, civil rights, LGBTQ issues, crime victims support, and others.

"Unionizing will allow us to have more input and influence over the policies and procedures that directly affect us and our work, and thus our ability to wholly show up for our clients. When we feel valued, the organization and our clients succeed." -Maria B. Quagliana, Paralegal

“It is essential for workers to have a formal and organized voice within the organization. Unionizing will further democratize our workplace.” -Tomás H. Lucero, Senior Paralegal

“In the last eight years, inflation has risen nearly 30 percent, but base wages for most staff here have gone up only 4 percent. This is clearly not sustainable. We need a seat at the table and a contract that works for everyone.” -Malcolm Kim, Staff Attorney

If their union is recognized, the staff at Empire Justice Center will join more than 3,000 members of the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys (ALAA) – UAW Local 2325. ALAA – UAW Local 2325 is the nation’s oldest union of attorneys and legal workers, and represents over 3,000 advocates across more than 30 nonprofit organizations.

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