



# Seattle Lunch and Learn

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# Wage Theft: A Defining Trend of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Labor Markets

*Broken Laws, Unprotected Workers*

3-City Survey of workers found:

**26%**

had not been  
paid  
minimum  
wage

**76%**

Overtime  
workers not paid  
overtime wages

**43%**

Retaliation  
against workers  
who  
complained

**Average wage loss per worker: \$2,634**

# Low Wage (often) = High Theft

- Retail (28.2% minimum wage violation rate)
- Home health care (87.2% overtime pay violation rate)
- Food preparation (72.9% off the clock violations)
- Waiters and cafeteria workers (85% rest and meal break violations)

# Key elements of compliance

- **Community Education**
- **Community-driven Enforcement**
  - Community monitoring and documentation;
  - Targeted audit capacity at city level (i.e. NOT complaint driven);
  - Strong penalties;
  - Protection against retaliation



# Pending City Minimum Wage Campaigns

Chicago	\$15.00 large employers
Los Angeles	\$15.00 hotel
San Francisco	\$15.00
San Diego	level not yet specified
Oakland	\$12.25
Richmond, CA	level not yet specified
Santa Fe County, NM	\$10.50
Las Cruces, NM	level not yet specified
Portland, ME	level not yet specified