WORKER BILL OF RIGHTS

Published: November 17, 2025

WORKER BILL OF RIGHTS

The Floor Under Every Louisville Worker — Metro's Workforce and Metro-Funded Work, Union and Non-Union

Replaces Version 1.0 (November 2025). Wages moved to the Kentucky Homeownership Wage Index*; Metro's own workforce to the* Metro Employee Bill of Rights.

THE PROBLEM

The rules that protect a worker in Louisville depend on who they work for:

 Wage theft — unpaid overtime, stolen tips, misclassification — is enforced by a state office in Frankfort and a federal district office downtown, and neither answers to Louisville
 A worker who reports it can be fired the same week, and the remedies are slow, federal, and unfamiliar
 Two people doing the same job in the same building can be paid differently and never know it
 Workers who try to organize face pressure that federal law is slow to answer
 Union members have a contract; everyone else has whatever the handbook says today

Current Reality: Your rights at work in Louisville depend on your employer, your union card, and your luck.
Our Solution: One floor, enforced by a Louisville Metro Labor Standards Office, for Metro's own workforce and everyone on Metro-funded work, with intake and referral for every other worker.
Impact: A place to file a complaint, a rule against retaliation, and pay you can see.

WHAT THE WORKER BILL OF RIGHTS GUARANTEES

Three rights. Each one binds Louisville Metro Government and everyone it pays outright, and reaches every other employer through the tools the city legally holds.

Right 1 — You will be paid what you earned: Wage Theft Enforcement

✓ A **Louisville Metro Labor Standards Office** that takes every complaint, investigates, and recovers back pay on Metro-funded work
✓ Penalties on Metro contractors and vendors who steal wages: repayment, contract suspension, and debarment for repeat violations
✓ One filing that moves: a formal referral and joint-investigation agreement with the Kentucky Labor Cabinet and the U.S. Department of Labor's Louisville district office, with Metro tracking the case until it closes
✓ A public register of adjudicated violations — every employer with a final wage-theft finding against it, in one place
✓ *Under legal review:* consequences for repeat, adjudicated offenders through the permits and registrations Metro issues — stated here as an intent, not a guarantee, until counsel confirms what KRS 337 leaves to the city

Right 2 — You can speak up: Right to Organize and Freedom from Retaliation

✓ Louisville Metro Government is neutral on organizing in its own workforce, in every department, union and non-union
✓ No retaliation for filing a wage complaint or joining an investigation: on Metro-funded work, that retaliation is a contract violation with the same consequences as wage theft
✓ In Metro's own workforce and on Metro-funded work, a firing, demotion, or cut in pay or hours within 90 days of a wage complaint or an investigation is presumed to be retaliation, unless the employer shows by clear and convincing evidence that it was not
✓ Organizing retaliation at a private employer is a federal matter — the Labor Standards Office helps a worker file with the NLRB and tracks the charge, so nobody faces it alone
✓ A confidential complaint line that does not require a lawyer
✓ Union and non-union alike: the right to organize belongs to the worker who has not yet organized, too

Why this right stops where it does: federal labor law (the NLRA) preempts a city that conditions its grants, incentives or abatements on how a private employer responds to organizing — the U.S. Supreme Court struck down exactly that in *Chamber of Commerce v. Brown* (2008). So this policy binds Metro as an employer, helps every worker reach the federal

process, and does not pretend to regulate what the NLRA reserves.

Right 3 — You can see what the job pays: Equal Pay and Pay Transparency

✓ Pay ranges in every Metro job posting and every posting for Metro-funded work
✓ An equal-pay audit of Louisville Metro Government, published, with a plan to close any gap
✓ Equal-pay audits as a condition of Metro contracts above a stated size
✓ An annual public report: what Louisville jobs pay, by sector, against the *Kentucky Homeownership Wage Index*

WHERE EACH RIGHT REACHES — HONESTLY

Kentucky preempts local wage law, and the 2016 Supreme Court decision on Louisville's minimum-wage ordinance drew the line clearly. This policy is written inside that line.

	Louisville Metro Government	Contractors, vendors, grantees, incentive recipients	Every other private employer
Wage theft enforcement	Direct	Contract terms + debarment	Intake, referral to state and federal enforcers, case tracking, public register; permit/registration consequences *under legal review*
Organizing + anti-retaliation	Direct (Metro is neutral)	Retaliation for wage complaints is a contract violation, presumed within 90 days of a complaint	Help filing with the NLRB; no Metro condition on organizing (NLRA)
Equal pay + transparency	Direct, audited	Contract terms above a threshold set in the ordinance	Voluntary — recognized under the Homeownership Wage Employer program

Legal review flagged for the draft: (1) any permit or registration consequence for private-sector wage theft, against KRS Chapter 337; (2) the equal-pay audit threshold for contractors, against Metro procurement rules; (3) any organizing-related condition on Metro's *proprietary* service contracts, against the NLRA's narrow market-participant exception — this draft imposes none. The commitments in the first column need no review; the second column's wage-theft and equal-pay terms are ordinary contract conditions.

IMPLEMENTATION COSTS

Component	Annual Cost
Labor Standards Office staffing (director, 6 investigators, intake, legal)	$1.5M/year
Contractor and vendor standards enforcement (audits, debarment process, equal-pay audit program)	$2.15M/year
Kentucky Homeownership Wage Index (annual computation and report; employer recognition program)	$0.35M/year
TOTAL	**$4M/year**

Funding: Metro general fund reallocation ($2.5M) and recovered wage-theft penalties on Metro-funded work ($1.5M). *Total unchanged from Version 1.0;* the enforcement line now carries the index inside the same $4M.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Year 1 (2027): Labor Standards Office established. Contractor and vendor standards (all three rights) written into every new Metro contract and renewal. Complaint line open. Pay ranges in every Metro posting.
Year 2 (2028): Metro equal-pay audit published with a closing plan. Referral agreements with the Kentucky Labor Cabinet and U.S. DOL in force. First public register of adjudicated violations.
Year 3–4 (2029–2030): Office at full capacity. Contract-threshold equal-pay audits in force. Annual wage report against the Homeownership Wage Index.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

For Workers:

- Back pay recovered instead of written off
- A complaint that does not cost a job
- The pay range before the interview, not after the offer

For Businesses:

• A level field: the employer who pays honestly no longer competes against the one who does not
• Contract standards known in advance, applied to every bidder the same way
• Lower turnover where retaliation and pay secrecy end

For Louisville:

• Wages that stay in the city instead of leaving in stolen overtime
• One office, one phone number, one register — for every worker in the county

---

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What happened to the $15 minimum wage?
A: Kentucky law does not let Louisville set one, and the courts said so in 2016. Rather than promise what cannot be signed, this campaign publishes the *Kentucky Homeownership Wage Index* — the wage it takes to buy a Kentucky home — recognizes employers who pay it, pays toward it in Metro's own workforce, and brings it to Frankfort. Wages are a separate policy now; this one is about rights.

Q: Does this apply to union workers?
A: Yes. A contract sets a floor for its members; this sets a floor for everyone, members included. Nothing here overrides a collective bargaining agreement.

Q: Does this apply to Metro Government's own employees?
A: Yes, directly and first. The *Metro Employee Bill of Rights* carries the same three rights into Metro's own workforce with the compensation plan that funds them.

Q: Can Louisville really enforce against private employers?
A: Fully for anyone Metro pays; by investigation, referral and public record for everyone else; and by license consequences after a finding, pending legal review. The policy says what Metro can do and does not claim more.

Q: How does this relate to the old version's sick leave and scheduling provisions?
A: They are held for the *Metro Employee Bill of Rights*, where Metro is the employer and can simply grant them. Extending them citywide runs into the same state-law question as wages; they will return here if and when Frankfort allows it.

EVIDENCE BASE

- **Local minimum wage preemption:** *Kentucky Restaurant Association v. Louisville/Jefferson County Metro Government*, Kentucky Supreme Court, October 20 2016 (6–1) — KRS Chapter 337 is a comprehensive scheme on wages
- **Federal labor-law preemption of local organizing conditions:** *Chamber of Commerce v. Brown*, 554 U.S. 60 (2008)
- **Federal wage-and-hour enforcement in Louisville:** U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, Louisville District Office
- **State wage enforcement:** Kentucky Labor Cabinet, Division of Wages and Hours (Frankfort)

OUR COMMITMENT

If you work in Louisville, you get paid what you earned, you can speak up without losing your job, and you can see what the job pays. Public or private, union or not — that is the floor, and Louisville Metro will stand on it first.

Related policies: *Kentucky Homeownership Wage Index* · *Metro Employee Bill of Rights* · *Economic Development & Jobs* (Proposal 1)

What This Means for YOUR Neighborhood

Every Louisville neighborhood is unique. Enter your ZIP code to see how this policy directly impacts your community:

Find Your Mini Substation

Enter your ZIP code to see when your neighborhood will receive a community police substation.

Find My Substation

63 mini substations across Louisville, at least one in every ZIP code, phased in over 4 years.

Part of my comprehensive public safety plan.

See the Budget Impact

Explore how this policy fits into my comprehensive $1.13 billion budget plan:

How Does My Budget Affect You?

See your personalized impact - zero tax increase, real benefits

Household Income $50,000 50000
Children in JCPS 0 0
Your ZIP Code

Your Personal Impact

How we calculate: Benefits based on average family savings from wellness center access ($800/year), youth program value (after-school + summer jobs), and your specific mini substation timeline. All benefits come from the same $1.13B budget - zero tax increase.

Share your results with friends and family:

Share My Results

⚖ Compare This Policy

See how my approach differs from current administration policies:

⚖ My Plan, Category by Category

Pick a category to see what my plan does, how it is paid for, and when it arrives.

Share This Plan Print This Plan
Public Safety Wellness Youth Economy Housing Transparency

Public Safety & Policing

My Plan

Community-based mini substations

Approach

- 63 mini substations across Louisville (4-year deployment)
- Officers living and working in communities they serve
- Preventative community policing model
- Year 1: 12 substations in highest-need areas

Timeline Year 1-4 phased rollout
Budget Same $1.13 billion; no new taxes; priorities re-pointed inside the adopted budget
Impact Projected response times: 3-5 minutes (campaign estimate)

Mental Health & Wellness

My Plan

Wellness centers placed by health need

Approach

- I will place 18 Community Wellness Centers by health need (CDC PLACES 2024 plus Census poverty data)
- Mental health counseling, addiction support
- Youth programs, family services
- At least one center in every LMPD division

Timeline 6 centers a year over Years 1-3
Budget $45M a year when fully built (18 centers at $2.5M each), inside the adopted budget
Impact Accessible care within every neighborhood, preventative focus

Youth Development

My Plan

Comprehensive youth investment

Approach

- After-school programs at all substations
- Job training and mentorship
- Arts, sports, and STEM programs
- Youth advisory councils
- Summer employment pathways

Timeline Immediate implementation with substation rollout
Budget $32.5M for youth programs, inside the adopted budget
Impact Accessible programs in every neighborhood

Economic Development

My Plan

Community wealth building

Approach

- Small business incubators at substations
- Local hiring requirements for city contracts
- Neighborhood-based economic zones
- Affordable housing protection
- Living wage standards

Timeline Immediate policy changes, 4-year infrastructure build
Budget Same $1.13 billion; no new taxes; priorities re-pointed inside the adopted budget
Impact Jobs and wealth stay in neighborhoods

Housing & Affordability

My Plan

Housing as a human right

Approach

- Expanded affordable housing trust fund
- Strong tenant protections
- Community land trusts

- Rent stabilization measures
- Anti-displacement policies for existing residents

Timeline Immediate policy changes
Budget Same $1.13 billion; no new taxes; priorities re-pointed inside the adopted budget
Impact Protects residents, prevents displacement

Government Transparency

My Plan

Radical transparency

Approach

- Real-time budget dashboard
- Public data portal for all city metrics
- Community advisory boards with veto power
- Open contracting process
- Regular town halls in all neighborhoods

Timeline Immediate implementation
Budget Low-cost digital infrastructure
Impact Citizens empowered with information and decision-making power

The Choice is Clear

Louisville deserves transformative change, not more of the same. Join us in building a city that works for everyone.

Join the Campaign Read Full Policy Platform

Share This Policy

Help spread the word about my vision for Louisville:

Related Policies You Might Like

How to Vote for Me

I am a write-in candidate: in the race for Mayor, mark the write-in spot and write **DAVE BIGGERS** (the last name, Biggers, is required).

Early voting, no excuse needed: October 29–31 · Election Day: Tuesday, November 3, 6 AM to 6 PM. Registration for the November 3 election closed October 5.

✓ Check My Registration and Polling Place View All Election Dates →

Stay Updated on This Policy

Get notified when this policy is updated or when I speak about this issue in YOUR neighborhood.

* indicates a required field

Email Signup Information
Fax Number (Leave blank)
Name *
Email * We'll send you updates about the campaign
Zip Code 5-digit zip code (optional)
☐ I'm interested in volunteering! We'll send you information about volunteer opportunities
Sign Up

We use your details only to reach you about the campaign. Privacy Policy

Have Ideas to Improve This Policy?

This is YOUR city. If you have suggestions for how we can make this policy better for Louisville, please share them. Every idea is reviewed.

Suggest an Improvement for Louisville

Have an idea for improving Louisville? Share your policy suggestion below. Your voice matters in shaping our city's future.

Policy Title *
Description *
0/2000 characters
Category Select a category...
Your Name *
Your Email *
ZIP Code (Optional)
☐ I agree that my suggestion may be reviewed and potentially incorporated into campaign policy. My email will only be used to notify me about the status of my suggestion.
Submit Suggestion

NOT ME, WE.

Together, we make Louisville better for everyone.