



YEAR 1 REPORT

July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

San Mateo County
Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement



Building the Foundation to Ensure Labor Rights



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The Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement is pleased to share this overview of our first year of infrastructure-building, community impact, and partnerships.

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**All workers in
San Mateo
County
have rights.**

The Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement promotes the rights of all workers in San Mateo County, regardless of their job or immigration status.



Dear friends and colleagues,

In December 2023, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to establish the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) to help address wage theft in our county. After a planning period focused on community input, best practices, and hiring key staff, OLSE officially launched in July 2025. This report shares highlights from OLSE's first year of building, launching, and delivering on its mission.



Shireen Malekafzali Taidi
*Chief Equity Officer and
Director of Economic
Opportunity and
Labor Standards*

OLSE is a collaborative effort of the County Executive's Office, County Attorney's Office, and District Attorney's Office. Together, we are working to build a San Mateo County where all workers are paid fairly and treated respectfully, and responsible employers are not undercut by competitors who don't follow the law.

In our inaugural year, OLSE focused on three core priorities: building trusted partnerships with community stakeholders, educating workers and employers about workplace protections, and creating the infrastructure needed to enforce local minimum wage laws. We are proud of what this first year made possible:

YEAR ONE HIGHLIGHTS

7

City
Partnerships

159

Outreach
Events

298

Intakes and
Inquiries

\$235K+

Recovered
for Workers

As we begin our second year, we are grateful for the support, partnership, and trust that have helped launch this work. We look forward to building on this foundation and continuing to serve workers, employers, and communities across San Mateo County.

In community,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Shireen Malekafzali Taidi".

Shireen Malekafzali Taidi

Chief Equity Officer and Director of Economic Opportunity & Labor Standards

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

Developing Local Enforcement Infrastructure

The Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) advances fair labor practices across San Mateo County. We work to build a county where all workers are paid fairly and treated with respect, and where responsible employers are not undercut by those who break the law.

In our first year, building the infrastructure needed to enforce local minimum wage laws was key to advancing this vision.

THE SAN MATEO COUNTY MINIMUM WAGE ORDINANCE

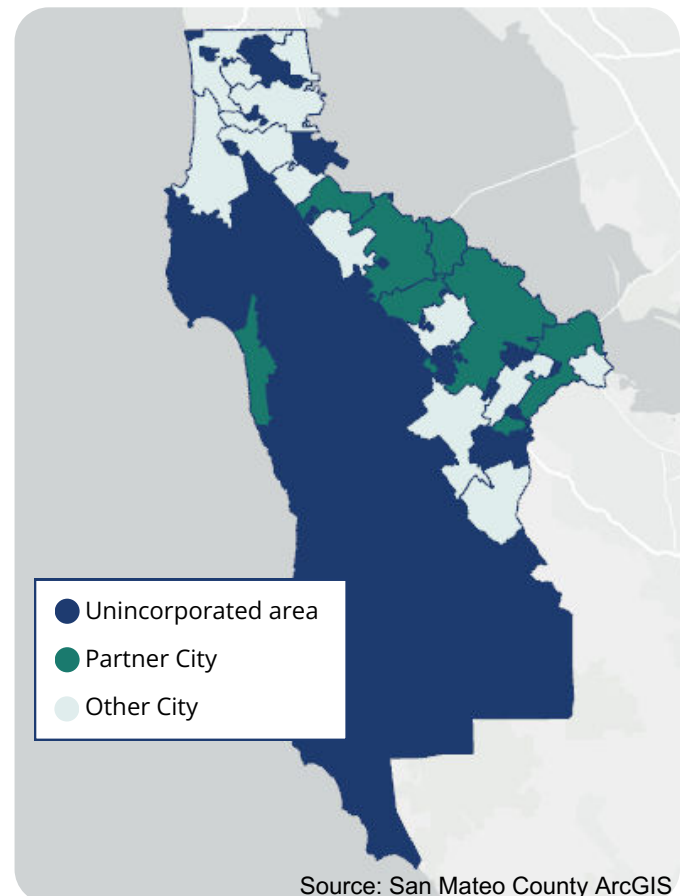
The County's Minimum Wage Ordinance sets the minimum wage for workplaces in the **unincorporated areas** of San Mateo County. In July 2025, the ordinance was amended to give OLSE enforcement authority and establish penalties for violations.

During Year 1, OLSE built out the core tools for implementation, including complaint and enforcement processes, model employer notices, and a bilingual FAQ to guide workers and employers on their rights, responsibilities, and the consequences of noncompliance.

CITY PARTNERSHIPS

Eleven incorporated cities in San Mateo County have their own minimum wage ordinances.

To help strengthen enforcement, **seven of these cities partnered** with OLSE during Year 1 (see map). OLSE supports partner cities through outreach, complaint intake, and investigations. All seven renewed their partnerships for FY 2026–27.



YEAR 1 PARTNER CITIES

- Belmont
- Burlingame
- Foster City
- Half Moon Bay
- Menlo Park
- Redwood City
- San Mateo

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Outreach, Education, and Advice

Education is the first line of enforcement. During Year 1, OLSE focused on helping workers understand their rights and supporting employers to understand their responsibilities under local labor laws.

OUTREACH & COMMUNITY EDUCATION

OLSE reached workers and employers through presentations, workshops, direct outreach, mailed notices, and multilingual educational materials. In collaboration with partners ranging from community-based organizations to other County departments, OLSE canvassed hundreds of businesses, distributed thousands of informational materials, and conducted outreach at agricultural worksites, health clinics, day laborer hubs and more.

OLSE also invested in practical tools and multilingual resources for workers and employers, including an online resource library with know-your-rights materials, minimum wage information, and model wage notices for employers.

Right: OLSE team members from the County Executive's Office and County Attorney's Office with partners from ALAS and the California Civil Rights Department.



OLSE team members from the County Executive's Office conduct outreach with partners from the Multicultural Institute (**left**) and Samaritan House (**right**).



Left: OLSE team members from the County Executive's Office and County Attorney's Office with partners from Puente; **Middle:** OLSE team members from the County Executive's Office and District Attorney's Office tabling at the Fair Oaks Health Center; **Right:** OLSE team members from the County Executive's Office with partners from the California Agricultural Labor Relations Board.

ADVICE, INTAKE, & DIRECT ASSISTANCE

During Year 1, OLSE established multiple avenues for workers and employers to seek help with workplace issues, including by phone, email, online inquiry forms, community referrals, and in-person office hours offered monthly in Half Moon Bay and Pescadero. OLSE also contracts with Step Forward Foundation to operate a free, multilingual, and confidential [Labor Advice Line](#) for workers and employers across San Mateo County.

Together, these services helped OLSE respond to nearly **300** inquiries about worker protections during its first year. While nearly all contacts came from workers, approximately 15 employers contacted OLSE or the Advice Line for compliance support.



Above: A sign for OLSE office hours at Coastside Hope in Half Moon Bay

BY THE NUMBERS

159

Outreach Events

1,854

Businesses
Canvassed

475

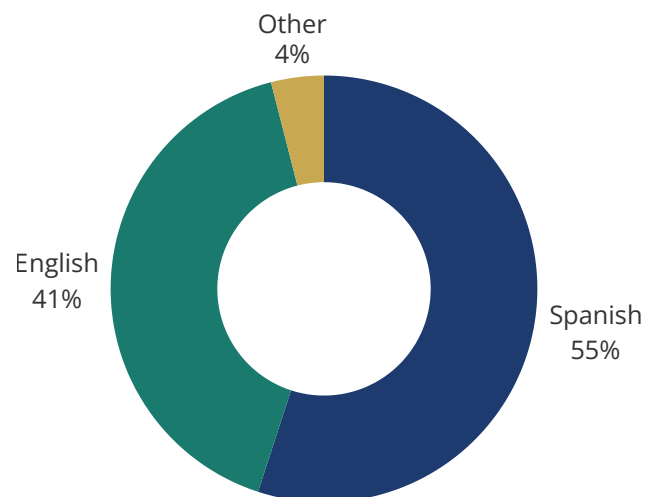
Presentation
Participants

167

Direct Intakes
(Inquiries and
Complaints)

131

Calls to the
Advice Line



**Direct Intake & Advice Line
Calls by Language**

AN HOUR WORKED IS AN HOUR PAID

Preliminary Enforcement Efforts

Many people who contact OLSE through the Advice Line or other intake channels are seeking information or referrals. Others wish to file complaints about specific workplace issues, including wage theft.

OLSE triages these complaints to identify the appropriate enforcement pathway:

- For alleged minimum wage violations in unincorporated San Mateo County and in cities that contract with OLSE for investigation services, OLSE may open a **civil investigation**.
- More serious allegations, including potential criminal wage theft, labor trafficking, or workplace violence, may be referred to the **District Attorney's Office** for criminal investigation, with the worker's consent.
- Matters outside OLSE or the District Attorney's jurisdiction are referred to the **appropriate state agency**.



OLSE enforcement staff from the County Attorney's Office, County Executive's Office, and District Attorney's Office.

CIVIL MINIMUM WAGE INVESTIGATIONS

OLSE enforces the County's Minimum Wage Ordinance and also investigates potential violations of the minimum wage ordinances of the seven cities that contract with OLSE for enforcement support. Civil minimum wage enforcement is carried out by staff in the **County Attorney's Office** and the **County Executive's Office**.

During Year 1, OLSE opened 16 civil minimum wage investigations. As of June 30, 2026, nine of these investigations were closed. These Year 1 investigations resulted in **over \$80,000 in restitution** to nearly **60 workers**, including payments secured through settlements and partial payments made while investigations were ongoing.

"I liked delivering flowers because I knew I was helping people celebrate happy occasions or comfort someone during a difficult time. I took pride in doing my job well. I never realized I was being paid less than the minimum wage until the business closed and I started asking questions. When I reached out to the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement, they listened, explained my rights, and helped me and several of my co-workers recover the wages we had earned. I'm very grateful because they made me feel like my work mattered and that someone was on our side."

- A San Mateo resident

CRIMINAL WAGE THEFT INVESTIGATIONS

The **San Mateo County District Attorney's Office Wage Theft Unit** investigates potential criminal wage theft and related labor offenses. Although OLSE coordinates closely with the District Attorney's Office on outreach, intake, referrals, and public communications, civil and criminal enforcement remain separate. This allows workers to pursue civil remedies even if they do not wish to participate in a criminal investigation, while preserving the distinct role of criminal enforcement.

Since its launch, the Wage Theft Unit has opened over two dozen investigations and **filed nine high-impact prosecutions**. As of July 31, 2026 it had secured **one conviction and collected \$14,438 in restitution** for workers.

LABOR COMMISSIONER JUDGMENT ENFORCEMENT

The Board has also tasked OLSE with exploring tools to address unpaid wage judgments owed by San Mateo County employers. Many judgments issued by the California Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE, also known as the Labor Commissioner's Office) remain unpaid for years, undermining workers' rights and fair competition. While many outstanding judgments are associated with businesses that are no longer in operation, OLSE is working closely with DLSE to identify and address collectable judgments.

In addition, through the **County Attorney's Office**, OLSE has piloted a judgement enforcement strategy using CAO's authority as a public prosecutor under the Labor Code to engage with San Mateo County employers who have failed to comply with DLSE judgments against them. During Year 1, CAO sent a demand letter to a San Mateo County employer with three outstanding judgments against it, requiring the company to provide proof of having satisfied the judgments or face litigation. This letter resulted in the company engaging with the DLSE to negotiate a settlement providing for over **\$140,000** in restitution to San Mateo County workers.

BY THE NUMBERS

\$235,248

Restitution Secured for Workers

\$80,810

associated with
Civil Minimum Wage
Investigations

\$14,438

associated with
Criminal
Prosecutions

\$140,000

associated with
DLSE Judgment
Enforcement

LOOKING AHEAD

Year 2 Priorities and Next Steps

As OLSE enters its second year, the office is focused on building on its enforcement foundation, developing new tools to strengthen accountability, and deepening and expanding partnerships.

For example, OLSE is working with the County's Division of Environmental Health Services (EHS) to support enforcement of unpaid DLSE wage theft judgments through a pilot program that connects judgment compliance with the food permit process. Likewise, the County Attorney's Office will continue their judgment enforcement work, with a focus on owners and operators who maintain ties to the county.

In August 2026, the County Attorney's Office filed the County's first civil wage theft prosecution, seeking unpaid wages owed to dozens of Coastside farmworkers. During the rest of Year 2, CAO will continue to leverage its authority as a public prosecutor under Labor Code 181 to hold employers accountable for wage theft violations that go beyond the minimum wage in unincorporated San Mateo County.

OLSE is committed to learning from the knowledge and experience gained in Year 1, while continuing to grow its efficacy. Looking ahead, our office will support the strengthening of minimum wage laws, expand our outreach capacity and continue to serve as a resource to employees and employers in the County.

We know that none of this work is possible without partnerships. We welcome opportunities to provide presentations and outreach on local labor standards, and we encourage partners to continue referring workers who may have experienced wage theft in San Mateo County. Together, these partnerships will help OLSE continue building a stronger culture of compliance and accountability across the county.

Thank you to our partners:

- City of Belmont
- City of Burlingame
- City of Foster City
- City of Half Moon Bay
- City of Menlo Park
- City of Redwood City
- City of San Mateo
- California Labor Commissioner's Office
- ALAS - Ayudando Latinos a Soñar
- Coastside Hope
- Community Legal Services of East Palo Alto
- El Concilio of San Mateo County
- Multicultural Institute of Redwood City
- Puente de la Costa Sur
- Samaritan House
- San Mateo County Central Labor Council
- Step Forward Foundation

CONTACT US



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Web: smcgov.org/olse

Labor Advice Hotline: **1-866-870-7725** (free and confidential)

All workers in San Mateo County have rights

The **Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement** promotes the rights of all workers in San Mateo County, regardless of their job or immigration status.

To ask questions or file a complaint, call our **free and confidential** Labor Advice Hotline or visit smcgov.org/olse.



Labor Advice Hotline
1-866-870-7725

Español
中文
Tagalog

Monday-Friday
9am-5pm

after hours,
please leave a
voicemail



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
OFFICE OF LABOR STANDARDS
AND ENFORCEMENT

OFICINA DE NORMAS LABORALES
Y CUMPLIMIENTO