



AFSC West Region News – May 2024

Stories of work from around the region

Welcome to the American Friends Service Committee's West Region monthly newsletter. Please send feedback to WestNews@afsc.org.



Acequias provide water for gardens, small farms, and wildlife. Photo: Yasmeen Najmi

People of the Land Program, Albuquerque

Protecting New Mexico's water democracy

In New Mexico, acequias have long served as a lifeline in the desert climate. These irrigation canals bring water from rivers to homes and farms, nourishing gardens, crops, and wildlife. But this unique water democracy faces big challenges. That includes pressures from development and climate change-driven drought. Since the 1970s, AFSC has supported community members in defending their water rights. Read [more](#) from Angelina Lopez-Brody and Sayrah Namaste of AFSC.

AFSC NM's [spring newsletter](#) includes stories about a new tutorial on declaring water rights, nourishing soil health for production and climate, our annual farmer gathering, and San Ysidro day on May 19.



67 Sueños, Oakland

Oakland youth share a powerful visit to LA, San Diego

From [Facebook](#): What a privilege it was to have traveled and witnessed the beauty, historia, cultura, and power of our communities. Shoutout to all the dope people and places we visited... Thank you to Pedro Rios of AFSC for showing us the reality that our migrant brothers and sisters live crossing the border -- it was an experience that remained very present with many of us. We hope to take all of these rich, sometimes hard but beautiful experiences with us to fuel us in our journey ahead! Pa'lante Siempre (Forward always!)



Project Voice Immigrant Rights Program, Oregon-Washington

AFSC joins partners at International Workers' Day Rally

AFSC staff joined partners at the Oregon State Capitol on May 1 to call for a ceasefire in Gaza, full funding for public schools, affordable housing for all, and a pathway to citizenship for all immigrants. Read [more](#) from the *Statesman Journal* and see [photos](#) from Pedro Sosa of AFSC.



Photo: Pedro Rios

US-Mexico Border Program, San Diego

Victory! Federal court rules on CBP custody

For over a year, U.S. Customs and Border Protection has detained migrants in open-air detention sites, without access to basic services. A judge recently affirmed that children held at these sites are indeed in CBP custody. That means CBP must comply with standards to ensure the safety and welfare of children at these sites. The ruling comes after nearly a year of efforts by the Southern Border Communities Coalition, which includes AFSC, to document and protest dire conditions at these sites. Read [more](#).



California Healing Justice Program, Oakland

Exposing the violence of militarized weapons in California prisons

AFSC has released a new [report](#) revealing the widespread use of militarized weapons on people in California prisons and jails. Over three years, state prison staff documented 22,315 uses of force against incarcerated people. That includes rubber bullets, pepper spray, and tear gas. “The massive use of militarized weaponry against people with mental illness, hidden behind prison walls, cries out for attention and action,” says John Lindsay-Poland of AFSC. John coordinated the report with assistance from Jennifer Tu of AFSC.



Pan Valley Institute (PVI), Fresno

Remembering the lives of farmworkers in the Central Valley

On March 28, 2024, a month after the tragic accident that claimed the lives of seven farmworkers, the Pan Valley Institute organized a vigil to honor their memory. Sixty community members came together to mourn and pay their respects. ArteVism intern Natalie Moreno, along with other interns and fellows, created an altar in the center of a pavilion in a park at the heart of Madera. The altar was adorned with photos of the farmworkers, candles, flowers, fresh fruit, and copal. Read [more](#) from Minerva Mendoza of AFSC.



Roots For Peace (RFP) Program, Los Angeles

Youth rally against in-house Metro police

Roots For Peace Youth Organizing Interns recently spoke out against LA Metro’s proposed in-house police department and advocated for care-first based alternatives. “As a Mexican woman who has lived in the low-income community of South Central, I’ve borne witness to the continuous cycle of systemic harm that policing produces on black and brown communities,” said RFP intern Cindy Alonso. Read [more](#) from Crystal Gonzalez of AFSC.



Colorado legislators celebrate at the “for cause” bill signing. (AP Photo/David Zalubowski)

Immigrant Rights Program, Denver

Coloradoans celebrate legislative wins

The Colorado General Assembly recently passed two initiatives championed by AFSC and our immigrant rights partners. “For cause” eviction protections will help vulnerable tenants. And the state has doubled its immigration legal defense fund. The fund guarantees legal representation to qualifying individuals with pending cases in immigration court. Read [more](#) about this victory and check out the latest [updates](#) from AFSC Colorado.



Take action for Gaza

Take action today – [tell Congress](#) we need a permanent ceasefire and humanitarian access now. Check out AFSC’s latest [statement](#) against Israel’s pending invasion of Rafah. Explore these [8 ways to support student protesters](#). And read [AFSC’s statement of solidarity](#) with the students and their nonviolent protests.



Migration Justice Webinar Series: Employment and Worker Rights

Tuesday, May 28. 4 p.m. PT

Please join AFSC staff from Oregon and from the Central Valley in California to learn about issues faced by immigrant workers in various sectors. We will offer an analysis of the current conditions and some ideas and opportunities for advocacy to ensure that all workers are able to access labor protections. This webinar will be bilingual in English and Spanish. Register [here](#).

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