



My Time at Make the Road New Jersey

Christopher Lugo



Summary

During my time at Make the Road New Jersey this summer, I had the opportunity to meet supportive staff members, enthusiastic members of the organization, and fellow interns passionate about social justice and community empowerment.

Despite the challenges of online remote work, my work experience at MRNJ was, both personally and professionally, meaningful and enriching.



List of Projects

- reached out to Amazon workers through Facebook groups
- created and posted social media content on Facebook to increase engagement
- participated in a training on online organizing
- organized phone calls with Amazon employees to discuss workplace conditions
- researched campaign contributions of police benevolent associations to local politicians
- researched partnerships between local police departments and Amazon Ring
- learned how to make government records requests
- called legislators to lobby for bills in the state assembly
- used mass-communication software to mobilize support for legislation
- supported Tax Day protests by providing research on Amazon's practices



Takeaways

- organizing communities is difficult but rewarding
- online organizing poses a unique set of challenges
- said challenges can be overcome with the right education and strategies
- organizing work is highly personal and requires good communication skills
- organizing work crosses political boundaries and local groups work together to create change
- local governments and institutions hold a lot of power and must be held accountable
- local lawmakers and politicians can be influenced by community mobilization
- public agencies should be subject to scrutiny and organizers can take up this work
- there are many tools to supplement and facilitate organizing work
- organizing work requires a multidisciplinary approach



Concluding Thoughts

I applied for this internship with MRNJ because I wanted to learn what it was really like to engage in organizing work. Before this summer, I had always thought it was what I wanted to pursue professionally, but I had never actually done this type of work before. Now that I have had this experience with such a stellar community organization, I am excited for what the future holds for me as a professional organizer.