Building Community

An Integral Approach to Addressing Day Laborer Related Concerns

NDLON
National Day Laborer Organizing Network

www.ndlon.org
Our Mission

The mission of the National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON) is to strengthen and expand the work of local day laborer organizing groups, in order to become more effective and strategic in building leadership, advancing low-wage worker and immigrant rights, and develop successful models for organizing immigrant contingent/temporary workers.

NDLON fosters healthy, safer and more humane environments for day laborers to obtain employment and raise their families. In this sense, NDLON advances the human, labor, and civil rights of day workers throughout the United States.
Who are the members of NDLON?

NDLON is composed of 33 dynamic community based organizations that work with day laborers in different capacities:

1. Operating Day Labor Worker Centers
2. Organizing day laborers in the streets
3. Providing services and protecting the civil and labor rights of day workers

As a national collaborative, NDLON connects over 40 worker centers nationwide under the same principles and practices.
Basic Elements of the Day Labor Market

- How many day laborers are there in the country:
  117,660
- Who are the day laborers:
  50% Mexicans - 35% Central Americans - 7% Us Citizens - 2% women
- Who are the day laborer employers:
  49% Home Owners - 43% Subcontractors and contractors - 7% Factories, restaurants and small businesses
- What kind of work do they perform?
- What are their earnings?
- How many day worker centers and corners are there in the country:
  65 day worker centers and about 600 corners
- What are the most common abuses that they suffer:
  Unpaid wages, police harassment, injuries at the workplace
The Nature of the Day Laborers’ Phenomenon From the perspective of the day laborers and their organizations

- It is not a law enforcement issue.
- It is an issue of economics that is determined by supply and demand dynamics.
- It is an issue of community relations.
- It is a civil, labor and human rights issue.
- It is an economic phenomenon with public health and Safety implications.
Who Are the Main Community Stakeholders Around the Day Laborer Phenomenon?

- Residents
- Business Owners
- Employers
- Day Laborers
- Pedestrians and Drivers
- Clients of Local Businesses
- Law Enforcement Agencies
- Public Officials
- Community and Civil Rights Organizations
Issues Associated with the Day Laborer Practice

REALITIES
- Traffic Safety (Traffic Jams, jaywalking, Obstruction of sidewalks, etc).
- Health Concerns (Lack of trashcans, bathrooms, etc).
- Exploitation.
- Community tensions caused by the negative interactions between day laborers and merchants, residents, pedestrians, customers, etc.
- Civil rights violations.
- Injuries at the workplace, among others.

PERCEPTIONS
- All the Day Laborers are Undocumented.
- They’re all Drunks.
- They’re Drug Dealers.
- They’re Terrorists.
- They Take Away the Jobs and Drive Down Wages and Working Conditions
- They Are Criminals.
- They don’t pay taxes.
- All the neighbors and merchants are racist.
- They’re not qualified workers

Lack of Order, Peace and Harmony: Deterioration of Community Relations
Non-Constructive Intervention Practices

- No Intervention at All
- Enforcement of Existing Ordinances such as loitering, jaywalking, obstruction of sidewalks, and trespassing among others in order to discourage the congregation of workers in public right of ways, etc.
- Prohibit Labor Solicitation and Hiring in Public Areas
Two Constructive Approaches

✔ Designated Areas

Designated Area in East Los Angeles

TX

National Day Laborer Organizing Network
2 Constructive Approaches

✓ Establishment of Formal Day Laborer Hiring Centers

- The Pasadena Community Job Center
- Macehualli Day Laborer Center, Phoenix, AZ
Day Labor Worker Centers

- More than 60 worker centers nationwide
- More than half have been created since 2000
- About three-quarters receive public funding
- Worker centers have emerged as the primary strategy for addressing the workplace violations experienced by day laborers

North Hollywood Day Worker Center
Are all Day Labor Centers good for the community?

**Jobs:** Centers must provide good and enough employment opportunities.

**Proximity:** Centers must be located in close proximity to where the day laborers originally congregated.

**Visibility and Accessibility:** Centers must be visible and accessible for both: Workers and employers.

**Day Laborer Participation:** Day Laborers must be involved in the operation of centers.

**Ongoing Community Support:** All stakeholders must be involved: Police, merchants, community organizations, city officials, etc.

**Voluntary participation:** Day Laborers should not be forced at gun point to attend a center to solicit employment.
Goals of Our Day Worker Centers

Jobs

Create daily, temporary and permanent employment opportunities with good wages and working conditions.
Goals of Our Day Worker Centers

Public Health and Safety

✔ Provide a healthier, safer and more humane environment for day laborers and their employers to meet and carry out their negotiations while preventing potential community conflicts. The criteria of success need to be clear and realistic and must guarantee the integrity of all peoples’ rights.
Goals of Our Day Worker Centers

Internal Community Building

Build a sense of identity and community through recreation, culture, education and organizing in order to eradicate existing nationalistic barriers and unfair competition while fomenting solidarity and unity.
Facilitate the integration of day laborers to the communities where they live and work through civic engagement activities. This process of integration must enable the day laborers to comply and enjoy the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities of other community sectors.
Foster the leadership abilities and the organizing of day laborers in order for them to promote and defend their human, civil and labor rights.
Establish networks of direct and indirect service providers in order to address immediate needs while avoiding charity, paternalism and dependency. Services should increase the leadership and self-sustaining capacity of day laborers.
Funding Sources for operation and organizing

(1) Individual donors
(2) Private foundations
(3) Contracts with local governments
(4) Local Businesses

(1) Churches
(2) Day Laborers
(3) Employers of day laborers

National Day Laborer Organizing Network
Day Worker Center Governing Bodies

Organization in charge of the center

Community Advisory Board

General Assembly

Staff: Site Manager, Outreach Coordinator and Substitute
How Do Day Worker Centers Operate?

Operational Systems

1. Governing Bodies
2. Staffing
3. Distribution of Jobs
4. Discipline Procedures
5. Marketing
6. Registration and Other Administrative Procedures
7. Community Outreach
8. Services
9. Civic Participation
10. Recreation
Registration and Other Administrative Procedures

- Daily Registration
- Membership

What Data is Documented at the Day Worker Centers?

- Donations
- Number of Phone Calls
- Incidents
- Wage Claim Abuses
- Number and Type of Jobs
- Number of Participating Day Laborers
- Permanent Jobs
- Ethnicity of Worker Participants
- Basic Information About Employers
Our Challenges

- Financial Stability and sustainable growth.
- The creation of more daily, temporary and permanent employment opportunities specially during low seasons and labor market recessions.
- Negative Stereotypes towards immigrant workers: Shaping public opinion on day labor community and work in order to improve the hostile environments against day laborers.
- Respond to the increasing needs of day laborers throughout the country. Day laborer organizations need to increase their capacity according to the growth of the day laborer community.
- Creation of more permanent job training programs.
- The construction of viable economic development projects.
- Enforcement of labor and civil rights protections of day laborers.
- Respond to the increasingly hateful and violent anti-immigrant attacks in a peacefully and orderly manner.
- Ensure the inclusion of day laborers in the immigration debate and reform.