

Collaborative Strategies for Day Labor Centers



The Institute for Local Government's mission is to promote good government at the local level with practical, impartial and easy-to-use resources for California communities. ILG is the nonprofit 501(c)(3) research and education affiliate of the League of California Cities and the California State Association of Counties.

The Institute's current program areas include:

- Local Government 101
- Public Engagement and Collaborative Governance
- Public Service Ethics
- Sustainable Communities



The Institute thanks the Zellerbach Family Foundation for its generous financial support for the development and dissemination of this publication and for research and resources related to day labor centers.

*Cover Photo: Day Worker Center of Mountain View
Photo Credit: Greg Keidan, Keidan Consulting*

*All decisions about the final content of this publication are made by the
Institute for Local Government.*

Copyright © 2011 by the Institute for Local Government

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| I. Introduction..... | 1 |
| Who Are Day Workers? | 1 |
| What Is a Day Labor Center? | 2 |
| Why Establish a Day Labor Center?..... | 2 |
| How Collaborative Strategies Contribute to the Success of Day Labor Centers..... | 3 |
| II. Collaborative Strategies to Support the Establishment of a Day Labor Center 7 | |
| Day Workers..... | 7 |
| Local Government Officials and Agencies | 8 |
| Nonprofit and Community Organizations | 9 |
| Foundations..... | 10 |
| The Broader Community..... | 10 |
| <i>Sidebar: Planning Processes for Day Labor Centers.....</i> | <i>13</i> |
| III. Collaborative Strategies to Support Day Labor Center Operations and | |
| Services | 15 |
| Day Workers | 15 |
| <i>Sidebar: Enhancing Worker Cooperation</i> | <i>17</i> |
| Local Government Officials and Agencies | 18 |
| <i>Sidebar: Addressing Day Labor Center Conflicts</i> | <i>21</i> |
| Nonprofit and Community Service Providers | 22 |
| The Broader Community | 23 |
| Schools and Universities | 24 |
| Employers..... | 25 |
| IV. Collaborative Strategies: Final Thoughts | 27 |
| Pay Attention to Your Collaborative Relationships and Partnerships..... | 27 |
| Keep Communicating | 27 |
| Foster Worker Leadership | 28 |
| Learn From Other Day Labor Centers and Organizations | 29 |
| In Summary | 30 |
| V. Resources for Further Reading | 31 |
| VI. Acknowledgements..... | 33 |

I. Introduction

This guide is designed to assist local officials, immigrant serving organizations, day labor center planners and leadership, and others to understand how collaborative relationships and partnerships can help communities to effectively establish, support and sustain day labor centers.

The collaborative strategies and partnerships highlighted in this guide are presented in three sections:

1. Collaborative Strategies to Support the Establishment of a Day Labor Center;
2. Collaborative Strategies to Support and Sustain Day Labor Center Operations; and
3. Collaborative Strategies: Final Thoughts.

This is not in any way intended as a comprehensive guide to the benefits or the challenges of day labor centers, to the various organizational forms that such centers can take, or to the many ways that day labor centers can be planned and implemented. For a more complete look at day labor centers and strategies, see the *Resources* section on page 31.

The information in this guide is derived from selected interviews with a number of day labor center staff, local officials, and others who sponsor, manage, collaborate with, and/or support many of the most successful day labor programs in California, as well as from other published reports and subject matter experts. The people who generously shared their experience, ideas and suggestions and made this guide possible are listed in the *Acknowledgements* section on page 32.

When considering collaborative efforts to establish or operate a day labor center, it is extremely helpful to learn about other centers and where possible to visit them and speak with staff, workers, local officials and others associated with a center. An updated [roster](#) of day labor centers in California as well as individual center descriptions and related resources are available on the Institute for Local Government's website at <http://www.ca-ilg.org/daylaborcenters>.

Who Are Day Workers?

The tradition of men gathering to seek temporary work dates back to ancient Greece and medieval England. In the United States, day laborers¹ worked on docks, railroads and construction sites as far back as the late 1700s.²

The first day laborers in California worked in agriculture, but urban Mexican immigrant workers gathered in Santa Barbara and Los Angeles to seek work with contractors and other labor

¹ For the purposes of this guide, the terms day laborer and day worker are used interchangeably.

² Toma, R. and Esbenshade, J., *Day Labor Hiring Sites; Constructive Approaches to Community Conflict*, 2001; and Abel Valenzuela, *Day Labor Program Evaluation* (for the City of Los Angeles Community Development Department).

recruiters as early as the 1910s.³ A variety of economic factors led to a rapid rise in the number of day workers in urban and suburban communities throughout the United States in the 1980s and '90s. California, particularly the southern part of the state, leads the nation in the number of day worker hiring sites.⁴

According to the 2004 National Day Labor Survey, about 117,600 workers gather at approximately 400 organized or informal hiring sites nationwide each day seeking work. About 40,000 of these day workers are in California, where they comprise 0.2% of the total work force statewide. The majority of day laborers in California are men born in Mexico or Latin America, but women and native-born residents are also day workers. The average day laborer in California spends five or six days a week seeking work and works two or three days, earning between \$500 and \$1,400 a month (depending on the season) and less than \$15,000 per year.⁵

What Is a Day Labor Center?

In response to the growing day labor market in the United States, many communities are creating formal hiring sites, generally called day worker or day labor centers. These sites range from newly constructed buildings and rented trailers to tents in vacant lots. While most day workers continue to seek work on street corners, in business parking lots or at gas stations, there are now a number of formal sites and centers where workers and employers can meet and transact business.

Local governments, immigrant-serving and other community based organizations, congregations and faith-based groups, and other local and regional nonprofits have established day labor centers to provide employment opportunities for workers, address community concerns about day labor practices, to improve traffic safety, and to protect workers. Five such centers were operating in the United States in 1992, and by 2006 there were 139.⁶ The first day worker center in California opened in 1989 in the Harbor City neighborhood of Los Angeles. Presently, the Institute for Local Government lists approximately 30 day worker centers in its [online roster](#) of these centers in California.

Why Establish a Day Labor Center?

Day labor centers are established - and sometimes not established - for a variety of reasons. A basic fact is that day laborers want to work and they seek employment where they can. There are also individuals and businesses that want to hire day workers and they seek them out. This

³ Valenzuela, Abel, *Day Laborer Program Evaluation* (for the City of Los Angeles Community Development Department), p. 3.

⁴ Toma, R. and Esbenshade, J., *Day Labor Hiring Sites; Constructive Approaches to Community Conflict*, 2001.

⁵ Valenzuela, A. and N. Theodore, E. Melendez, and A.L. Gonzalez, *On the Corner: Day Labor in the United States*. 2006.

⁶ Fine, J. (2006). Worker Centers: Organizing Communities at the Edge of the Dream. *Industrial & Labor Relations*. Vol. 60, No. 2.

system of exchange often develops incrementally and informally, and the results can be problematic. Often there are concerns voiced by residents or businesses.⁷

A day labor center is one response to these dynamics. Each community must assess its own needs and make its own decisions about whether to develop such a center. Generally, however, it appears that day labor centers that are well-planned, developed and managed can provide a useful and orderly place for day workers and potential employers to find one another, and can also significantly reduce the traffic, safety and health concerns often associated with more informal day labor hiring.

These centers can also help ensure that workers earn and are paid a fair wage. One study of Los Angeles day laborers revealed that 48% had been denied payment for their work and 52% had been paid less than promised. These problems are exacerbated by the anonymity of many of these employment relationships, and the hesitancy of many day workers to seek redress due to fears relating to their immigration status.

Centers can also help employers more effectively identify workers with the skills they are seeking, and add to the employers' satisfaction with the experience.

These centers can also provide workers with a range of additional services, including English language training, legal and citizenship assistance, public engagement and leadership skills and opportunities, health care and information, social activities, and more.⁸

UCLA Professor Abel Valenzuela observes that workers who use day labor centers not only find employment more successfully but also become more active participants and contributors to their communities.

How Collaborative Strategies Contribute to the Success of Day Labor Centers

In the context of day labor centers and this report, collaboration generally involves two or more separate organizations or groups that create a relationship and a process or structure to work together to accomplish a common goal. We admittedly stretch this definition a bit in this guide, often in an effort to include in our discussions the importance of a day labor center's relationships with the broader community.

In any case, we are not so much concerned here with the finer and abstract points of collaborative practice or collaborative theory. Our interest is primarily in drawing attention to the kinds of collaborative relationships - or partnerships if you like - that can lead to more successful

⁷ See Toma, R. and Esbenshade, J., *Day Labor Hiring Sites; Constructive Approaches to Community Conflict*, 2001, for a list of typical concerns, pps. 5, 6.

⁸ Some observers caution that such services should complement the employment goals of workers and the center, and not dilute attention to helping day workers secure jobs.

and sustaining day labor centers. However, it may be worth mentioning the often noted distinctions between *cooperation*, *coordination* and *collaboration*.

Here is one set of definitions:

Cooperation: Shorter-term informal relations that exist without any clearly defined mission, structure, or planning effort. In general, cooperative partners share information about the subject at hand only as needed.

Coordination: Typically more formal relationships, with the partners involved in longer-term interactions in support of a specific effort or program.

Collaboration: A generally more durable mission-driven relationship often with separate organizational partners coming together within a single (often new) structure, process or mechanism.

While we will use the terms *collaboration* and *collaborative strategies* in this report to describe the organizational and other partnerships and relationships we wish to highlight, it may be useful to draw on the above distinctions and consider two lessons that will help any groups work better together.

1. *Do we understand our relationship in the same way?* For instance, if one partner thinks it is informally cooperating with another on an “as-needed” basis, and another sees the relationship as characterized by a common mission, a commitment to ongoing and open communication, and joint decision-making, then problems will arise. Make sure you’re on the same “partnership” page with others you are working with.
2. *Did we do our homework?* As groups and organizations move from relationships characterized by cooperation to those with the above mentioned aspects of coordination and collaboration, more is required of the partners to ensure a successful relationship and optimal outcomes. Beyond knowing if you’re just on the “same page,” it takes time to build a foundation of organizational understanding and trust, to plan together, to work out shared expectations, to communicate usefully and appropriately, and to decide how to work and perhaps make decisions together. This means taking the time to do it right, and paying attention to the process of working together throughout the organizational relationship.

To be successful, the collaborative strategies described in this report will certainly require good planning, effective communication, clear roles, and a commitment to address challenges in a straightforward way.

Interviews with people involved in operating the most well-regarded worker centers in California illustrate the vital role of such collaborative strategies that involve day laborers, local government agencies, community-based nonprofits, employers and other businesses,

congregations and faith-based organizations, local residents and other community stakeholders in crafting unique local approaches to the day labor issue. These strategies are important at all stages of center development, from establishing the need for a center to sustaining it over the longer term.

Among the important outcomes of such strategic collaboration are:

- A fuller understanding of all the factors relevant to the possible creation of a day labor center, including points of concern and opposition;
- A greater capacity to create a day labor center with the best resources and services needed to respond to unique community and worker needs;
- A larger network of potential employers and more opportunities for worker employment;
- A potential for the participation of many groups, such as day workers, law enforcement, clergy, and many others, whose support, participation and “ownership” will add to a center’s effectiveness; and
- An opportunity for broader community education and understanding.

Consult with Legal Counsel

The focus of this publication is on collaborative strategies that may be useful for communities considering the operation of day labor centers in their area. As with any matter, close consultation with an agency’s counsel is advised about legal issues that can arise in connection with the development and operation of such facilities.

Three final points can be made about the potential for collaborative strategies to positively impact the success of day labor centers.

The first is that centers are more likely to successfully adapt to changing conditions when they have multiple collaborative relationships. Being part of a broader network makes organizations “smarter” by having more information upon which to draw. They are also better able to learn about and take advantage of new opportunities, and to respond to and address challenges, by drawing on the additional resources and relationships that collaboration has created.

Secondly, such strategies and relationships are an indicator to funders (and potential funders) of a vibrant and well-regarded day labor organization. Day labor center directors confirm that private and public sector funders are interested in center collaboration, especially with groups that can provide additional services to day workers.

In fact, such collaborative relationships can also alert day labor programs to funding opportunities of which they might not otherwise be aware. For instance, the relationship between a day labor center and a health clinic in San Mateo County helped the center access county funds to support worker health.

Finally, it should be noted that there are a variety of organizational purposes, sponsors, structures

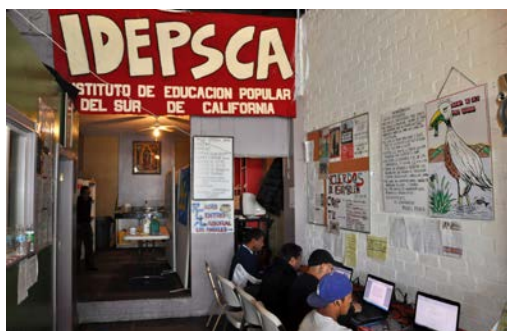
and services that can characterize day labor centers, often closely related to local needs and circumstances. A center's collaborative strategies will help to shape, but will also undoubtedly be shaped by, a center's development and specific local conditions.

II. Collaborative Strategies to Help Establish a Day Labor Center

Communities throughout California have established formal day labor centers, and interviews with center staff, local officials and others suggest the importance of collaboration and partnerships at the initial and early stages of a center's development. A number of the most important of these participatory and collaborative relationships are described in this section.⁹

Day Workers

Day workers themselves are an important stakeholder group that should be consulted and involved from the earliest stages of center development. They best understand their own needs for employment and for other services that a day labor center might provide. They also know under what rules, in what location, and with what opportunities for employment they would be more or less likely to participate in a formal day labor center.



Computer access and training helps day workers develop employment skills in Los Angeles.

Day workers are not all the same. They are of different ages, and probably come from different countries and from various regions within the same country. They will likely have different English-speaking capacities as well as a wide range of skills and work experience. And they may be women as well as men, especially if there is a formal - or perhaps a “virtual” online - day worker center. This suggests that what works in terms of employment opportunities, as well as to encourage participation in a center's establishment, may be varied.

A community that does not involve workers themselves in the planning of a center will probably miss essential information about these men and women that is needed for the center's success. This would also be a missed opportunity to generate understanding and support among day workers for the center and to engage them in spreading the word to others who may use the center's services. Additionally, day workers who understand how a center can benefit them will more likely support the facility and the rules it creates.

Engaging day workers in the planning stages also offers opportunities for addressing misperceptions and stereotypes on the part of the larger community. As one experienced leader from the National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON) puts it, “Once you begin to break down walls and to facilitate a discussion between day laborers and the community, you break down misperceptions of who day laborers are — and this leads to stronger centers once they are

⁹ Also see Toma, R. and Esbenshade, J., *Day Labor Hiring Sites; Constructive Approaches to Community Conflict*, 2001, for information on building alliances, pps. 8-10.

established. It is important to remember that attention to language access issues, including translation services where appropriate, may be an important component of successful day worker involvement.

As noted above, day workers in any given community may themselves represent different ethnic and cultural groups and various countries and in-county regions of origin. This may at times cause misunderstandings, tension, discord, or a fear of being excluded from opportunities or resources. While the each situation will be different, this may require attention to inclusion, group building efforts among day workers themselves, and ongoing attention to these dynamics as you engage day workers and develop center services.

Local Government Officials and Agencies

Local government officials are a key to the success of almost any community's day labor center. Whether the question is the need for a center, its location or specific uses, the role of law enforcement, how to effectively attract employer interest and build community support, or opportunities to secure financial resources, providing information to and engaging local officials will be important if not essential.

The siting of a day labor center can be particularly challenging and requires that officials have been appropriately involved in considering and shaping the purposes and understanding of a proposed center. This is important in part as the site of a center is directly connected to the potential for its broad use by day workers. This suggests the early active involvement of the appropriate local officials rather than a presentation of a fully formed proposal of which they have not been a part. Local officials will also be concerned about resident views as well on this question (see section on The Broader Community, p.10).

There are examples of local officials who have not only approved day labor center sites but have assisted in the identification of suitable property for a center and helped change zoning ordinances to allow center operations. The City of Mountain View issued a conditional use permit to allow occupancy to the building purchased and renovated by that city's day worker center. The City also leased a parking lot adjacent to the day worker center, at no charge for twenty years, as a show of support for the center.



Local leaders attend Day Worker Center of Mountain View event.

Typically, whether as part of a center planning group or task force, or informed and consulted individually or collectively by day labor center planners, local officials (including the city manager or county administrative officer) should be among the first in the community consulted in these discussions. Sharing information with individual local officials may be particularly helpful at the earliest planning stages.

Local officials can also help identify other stakeholders who can be potential partners in the

effort to explore the establishment of a day labor center. A City of Los Angeles staff member notes that city council members have played an important role in successfully inviting business owners to participate in day labor center-related dialogues and planning efforts.

Local government departments may also find it useful to add or integrate certain public services into the set of hiring and other activities that would be available to workers at a day labor center. City or county agencies may wish to provide health-related information or services, language training, citizenship preparation, or other forms of assistance. Early involvement by local officials can help shape the optimal combination of these services for workers, while adding to the overall success of the collaborative effort to create the day labor center.

A special mention should be made about the importance of local law enforcement in efforts to plan a day labor center. Police and sheriffs may be interested finding new ways to address day labor issues as they may be receiving complaints about people seeking work on the streets and outside of local businesses. Law enforcement agencies will have important information to offer about the day labor situation in a community, and their participation and support can enhance center success. (Also see section on law enforcement on page 18.)

Nonprofit and Community Organizations



Day workers at the Harbor City Hiring Site in Los Angeles.

Reaching out to local nonprofit and community leadership, advocacy and service groups - including congregations and faith-based organizations - is an important step in day labor center planning and development. This outreach is useful as a way to broadly disseminate information about a developing a center and to perhaps identify groups and individuals with similar interests.

However, this can also be a very important way to identify organizations whose missions may overlap with that of a proposed day labor center and that may become partners in educational activities or services connected with the center.

The breadth and depth of such partnerships may be predictive of how successful a center will be. For instance, these relationships may have a direct bearing on developing and implementing a successful overall funding strategy for a center.

One-on-one exploratory meetings with potential organizational partners can be a good way to start. Such meetings can allow those considering the formation of a formal day labor center to gauge whether there is sufficient interest among possible collaborators to explore common goals and address how to successfully operate a center. Most centers rely on a range of organizational partners to fund and support operations and provide needed services to workers. These organizations are more likely to be strong supporters if they have a voice in establishing the center and feel invested in its success.

Foundations

Philanthropy can be another important source of support for day labor center planning. In some cases foundation program staff may wish to actually participate in planning discussions. Even if direct funding by a foundation is not a possibility, foundation staff may bring expertise, access to information, and contacts with other important planning partners.

Engaging Unions

It will often be very important to engage unions in discussions about proposed day labor centers. In some cases unions may oppose such centers, seeing day workers as a less expensive alternative to unionized labor, while in others they may be strong supporters. Day labor centers have at times suggested that it advantages unions if day workers are organized through a formal center where wages and working conditions are improved. There are examples of centers working with unions to provide training for day workers.¹⁰

The interests and dynamics in this arena may be very situational and depend greatly on the specific community. In any case, it is a good idea to meet with the relevant unions early on to explain the intent and nature of the proposed center.

The Broader Community

Communications

Informing resident and local business perceptions and understandings about day workers, and about their community's day labor needs and circumstances, will likely be an important step in establishing a day labor center. Most residents and local business owners (or managers) will understandably only know what they see: people on the streets looking for work. They will know little about where these individuals have come from, why they are looking for work, what they are paid, or who employs them and why. Residents and business owners may also make assumptions about the legal status of these workers and where they live. Also, attitudes and opinions about immigration and immigration policy in general may inform peoples' views about the establishment of a day worker center.

It is especially important to reach out to local businesses. Businesses of all sizes can be important partners in the planning and development of a day labor center. Some businesses may be interested in the topic in a general way, but those that are impacted by present on-the-street day worker hiring practices will have a particular interest, and may see a center as an answer to a number of their concerns. At the same time, they probably will have questions and concern about the siting of a proposed center. They should be invited to the table early in a day worker

¹⁰ See Toma, R. and Esbenshade J., *Day Labor Hiring Sites; Constructive Approaches to Community Conflict*, 2001, p. 10.

center planning process. (For the particular role of businesses that employ day workers, see page 25.)

Any collaborative strategy for establishing a day labor center, especially including its siting, will benefit by a community communications and engagement component that reaches out to residents and businesses. This will create a community that is more informed about the problems that a day labor center proposes to address and the results anticipated. Overall, this adds to the information available and provides an opportunity to identify, through constructive means, both additional interest and support as well as points of concern and opposition. Both are important to a community's consideration of a day labor center.

While there may be very few resources to support communications during the planning stages of a day worker center, it is important that information about the effort come directly from center planners and not only from others.

Be aware of other day labor centers in California and their experiences.¹¹ Consider the development of a PowerPoint presentation for local community, faith, business and other groups to provide information about who day workers are, the purposes of day labor centers, and the planning effort underway. The real experiences of other communities that presently have day labor centers may be particularly helpful.

City of Mountain View Council Member Mike Kasperzak explains that while he initially heard from residents opposed to the city helping to fund a day labor center, over time a groundswell of public support developed for the center as people understood its planned purpose. He also believes that a review of how other communities grappled with day labor issues helped Mountain View officials decide to support the day labor center's development.

It is not helpful to oversell potential benefits. For instance, suggesting that day labor centers will "end all on the street solicitation" for employment will probably not be a realistic claim.

At the proper time, working with local media to generate coverage of day workers in the community and the need for a formal hiring site can also help inform the public. However, *any* effort to develop a day labor center will undoubtedly generate immediate media interest. Therefore, developing relationships with reporters and connecting them with day labor center planners and workers can help generate balanced coverage of the issue. Holding meetings and press conferences where workers explain why and where they need a center can also provide important information to the broader community. The provision of translation services may be needed to support such worker participation.

¹¹ See the Institute for Local Government website for a roster of these centers in California: www.ca-ilg.org/daylaborcenterroster.

Community Meetings

Community discussions that allow residents to hear about planning efforts for a day labor center and to express their concerns, questions or support may be a useful step in a center's planned development. Questions about a center's location may be an item of particular interest and concern. (Also see *Planning Processes for Day Labor Centers* below.)

It's important that any meetings for this purpose are straightforward and transparent about intent. If the meeting is about whether to have a day labor center at all, then say so. If meeting organizers are committed to developing a center but are open to its location, operating rules, and services offered, then make that clear. If a center's development is going forward with some plans already in place, then meeting participants should be given that information. In general, "no secrets and no surprises" is a good public engagement rule.

Such meetings can help inform community members, clarify rumors and misperceptions, identify concerns, generate new thinking and ideas, and help shape center planning. However where a local situation has become very heated on the day labor issue, these meetings can become less a conversation and more of a flash point for very heated and unproductive statements and accusations. Day labor center planners will have to judge the best options in this regard given local circumstances. However, real differences of opinion are not a good reason to forego such conversations.

In addition to clear and honest meeting intent, using well-qualified impartial facilitators and creating and enforcing mutually agreed-upon ground rules can help promote a productive exchange of ideas. Small group discussions can also be a good process tool. In some cases a dialogue whose only purpose is the exchange of information and individual learning may be appropriate.

When day workers and supporters in San Francisco decided to explore forming a day labor center, they attended many community meetings organized by other groups. They also went door to door in the site neighborhood asking people to share their concerns and answering questions. Meetings that gave residents a chance to meet and talk with day laborers themselves (with translation services as needed) were very important to the success of the center, according to a senior staff member.

Planning Processes for Day Labor Centers

Those who are interested in developing a formal day labor center often begin by discussing the idea with like-minded individuals and organizations. Sooner or later however, and probably sooner, others will also wish - and probably demand - to have their voices added to these conversations.

Every such situation is unique of course, and planning should respond to specific local conditions and dynamics. However in many cases two quite distinct, but ultimately connected, processes may be called for.

Groups and organizations that are potential partners in an effort to develop a center will often benefit from the opportunity to think through the center's establishment, its organization, and its possible services. This is often accomplished by creating an informal or more formal coalition, committee or task force that comprises a variety of stakeholders, such as those described in this guide.

A second, and much more inclusive process, can be established to involve any individual or group affected by or concerned about day labor activity and/or the establishment of a formal center. This second process can be particularly important when there is some level of controversy, or simply the normal challenges, accompanying the idea of a day labor center's development. The purpose of this process is to address concerns and challenges and, if possible, to forge a plan or recommendation that generates broad support.

Groups participating in the first such collaborative planning process will also typically participate in the more inclusive effort, if there is one. Depending on the degree of agreement among these organizations in the first process they may participate as a single stakeholder in the more inclusive process.

Local officials may choose to participate in one, both, or neither of these processes depending on how they see the local agency's most appropriate role.

In either process, participants will find it helpful to learn about or visit centers in other communities and interview various stakeholders associated with these efforts. In this way the group can learn from others' experiences and better visualize how a center might benefit their own community.

The role of day workers themselves in these planning efforts should be underscored. Also, as a day labor center director has stated, adding women workers can be a successful strategy in enhance women's roles in traditionally male-dominated worker centers. (*Con't. on next page.*)

Planning Processes for Day Labor Centers (*con't.*)

Three Examples

When community leaders sought a new site for the **Mountain View** Day Worker Center, a group of more than 30 people, representing faith, nonprofit and community organizations, local government and others, worked together to develop a plan. They convened four large meetings, with subgroups meeting on specific topics in between, that created a plan that eventually resulted in the acquisition of a permanent location for the center.

A coalition of day workers, area residents, city council members, police, parks and recreation department staff, representatives from a local hospital and immigrant advocates worked together to create and implement a plan that established the Harbor City day labor center in **Los Angeles**.

In **Graton**, a small unincorporated community in Sonoma County, a year-long facilitated consensus process, involving more than 50 people in approximately 25 meetings, created agreements that addressed concerns and created community support. In response to resident questions about the problem of excessive noise early or late in the day, the center limited its hours of operation. To address potential employers' concerns about communications issues, the center offers English classes. According to a county supervisor, bringing everyone to the table and surfacing the common interests was a key to this successful process.



The Day Worker Center of Mountain View.

III. Collaborative Strategies to Support Day Labor Center Operations and Services

Once established, the need for a day labor center to embrace collaborative strategies does not cease. If anything, it becomes more essential and requires ongoing attention to nurture and develop. Building on the information presented above, the following subsections offer ideas on how collaboration and participation with a variety of important stakeholders and audiences can lead to more effective and responsive center operations.

Day Workers

Many day labor center staff and supporters point to the continuing and active involvement of day workers themselves as critical to effective center services and overall success. Of course workers' involvement at this stage of a center's development will be easier and more successful if they have been engaged earlier (see *Day Workers* under the previous section, page 7). At the same time, some centers may experience substantial worker turnover that can add challenges to such worker involvement. This is another area where it is important to be realistic.

Areas where active worker participation in center operations can be most useful include:

- Developing center policies and procedures;
- Community outreach;
- Community improvement initiatives; and
- Peer education.

It is useful to remember, as noted earlier (see p. 7), that day workers in your community may themselves represent different ethnic and cultural groups and various countries and in-county regions of origin - as well as gender, age and other differences. Encouraging broad and inclusive representation in the above activities will enhance impacts overall.

Developing Center Policies and Procedures

As mentioned in the earlier section on establishing a day labor center, day workers themselves will best understand how a center can meet their needs. Additionally, when workers play an active role in developing center policies, this adds to the center's legitimacy among workers, creates new "champions" for its success, and generates greater peer pressure among more workers to use the center's resources.

Achieving worker understanding and support for rules and regulations is also an important way to attract workers and employers, and to establish positive relationships with law enforcement and other local officials. Overall, well-run centers where workers help make and enforce their own rules enjoy greater worker and community support.

There are examples of such worker participation at centers throughout California. Individual workers sit as members of formal boards and also serve in advisory roles, while some centers invite all workers to meet together and offer input and ideas. Examples include:

- Workers at the Pomona Day Labor Center take part in developing center policies and day-to-day operational procedures. The center holds its board meetings in Spanish and on-site so that day laborers can participate.
- In Los Angeles, workers at each hiring site take part in weekly, facilitated assemblies to set rules and regulations and decide how to enforce them. Each worker has an equal vote in determining the center's rules and addressing controversial issues, such as how jobs will be allocated.
- At the San Francisco Day Labor Center, workers meet every other week to discuss issues such as the need for additional services, jobs allocation and the establishment of rules for worker behavior and appearance.

Community Outreach

Many day labor centers also engage workers in outreach activities. These efforts may be directed to encouraging a greater use of the center by employers, either businesses or private citizens, or the education may be directed to encouraging more day laborer use of the center and its services.

There may also be continuing opportunities for day workers to take part in presentations and dialogues with community residents and groups. This can be a part of an ongoing communications effort to keep residents and others informed of the center's current work and more knowledgeable about day worker needs and issues. With appropriate preparation, support and translation services, day workers can be exemplary center spokespersons.

Workers organized through the Multicultural Institute, which operates several day labor centers in California, volunteer to post flyers and hand out business cards to local merchants in an effort to encourage more employment opportunities. Multicultural Institute staff report that workers who visit local businesses and introduce themselves and center services generate new interest by homeowners and businesses in hiring workers for home projects. In Los Angeles, workers take turns volunteering to hold up a sign pointing out their center near a major intersection and distribute flyers at businesses and residences.

Community Improvement Initiatives

Workers can participate in a variety of community initiatives, including beautification and disaster relief, to boost public perception of day laborers and the local center. In one popular model, workers lead and participate in community cleanup efforts. For example, workers at the Harbor City site in Los Angeles have volunteered to clean a tunnel under the freeway, plant a garden in front of the site and cut the grass in a vacant lot nearby. Workers at the Pomona Day

Labor Center participate in a city-sponsored “Christmas in April” event each year. Mountain



Day Worker Center of Mountain View workers and a staff member.

View Day Labor Center workers volunteer their time to improve the grounds of local public schools, donate blood and help build a community garden for senior citizens. They wear brightly colored t-shirts advertising “Reliable workers, Ready to serve” while volunteering. Day workers, organized through their day labor centers, have also made a positive impression in their communities by volunteering in disaster relief and recovery efforts. In Lake Forest and Malibu, day laborers worked to help protect local schools and churches from fires and flash floods. In Lake Forest, workers volunteered to lay netting on barren hillsides to prevent erosion after fires destroyed vegetation.

The director of the Pomona Day Labor Center believes that workers’ participation in community service, beautification and other such programs helps establish the center as a longstanding community resource and not just a temporary solution to the “day labor problem.” These workers’ efforts pay off, she suggests, both by improving the community and helping day workers be viewed as a part of that community.

Peer Education

Support from the cities of Mountain View and Los Altos allows the Day Worker Center of Mountain View to train and pay worker liaisons. These trained workers educate their peers on the streets about commonly encountered legal issues, and also suggest ways to respectfully co-exist with neighbors.

Enhancing Worker Cooperation

Several day labor centers have developed programs and strategies to build a sense of belonging, cooperation and unity among the day workers they serve. These workers are men (and often women) from different countries or country regions; they frequently possess very different literacy and English speaking skills; and each has his or her own individual goals. Day workers are certainly not all like, and many centers are taking steps to help them work together to achieve their common goals.

According to the Mountain View Day Labor Center’s Executive Director, a key component of the center’s success is the workers’ sense of belonging, much like a family whose members support each other. Efforts to build this sort of cooperation among workers are especially important when culture and language are barriers to common understanding and participation.

Organizing regular communal meals, and celebrations with food and music, are popular ways of encouraging understanding and common purpose. One center’s workers bring their families to a weekly lunch at a donated church space each Friday. Others organize center soccer teams. *(Con’t. on next page.)*

Enhancing Worker Cooperation (Con't.)

The Teatro Journalero, a day labor theater group in Los Angeles, makes presentations that educate workers about timely issues such as getting seasonal flu vaccinations. Workers and staff at the Graton Day Labor Center are partnering with a theater collective to produce plays that inform the general public about workers' experiences.

Local Government Officials and Agencies

Once a center is operating, the relationships between day labor centers and local government is no less important than in the earlier period of a center's initial establishment. Of course starting points can be quite different. In some cases centers are very much a part of local government, usually through funding and contractual arrangements, while in others they exist as free standing nonprofit organizations with fewer formal relationships with their local agencies.

However, whatever the formal relationship might be, well-established collaborative relationships will result in more effective and responsive center operations. This requires that the information sharing and collaborative efforts begun when the center was getting established cannot be allowed to lapse. This can easily happen given the increasing attention that day labor center staff, boards, advisors and others must pay to the maintenance of center services and overall administration and operations.

It is also helpful for center staff to note that a relationship with *one* elected or appointed official may not represent an optimal collaborative relationship with their local government. There will of course always be those who are "champions" and particularly strong supporters of a day labor center. But there will be turnover sooner or later, and too long and close a relationship with only one (particularly elected) official may create an information imbalance and contribute to a center becoming a divisive campaign issue. A center, as well as local officials, should attempt to ensure that a center's purpose and work are understood by a broad range of local officials and staff, and that these relationships, once made, are maintained.

Interviews with day labor center staff and local officials suggest that positive and collaborative relationships are especially important in the areas of law enforcement, funding, services and communications.

Local Law Enforcement

Continued communications and relationships with local police and sheriffs are a hallmark of the successful operations of day labor centers. In many instances, day workers look to law enforcement for protection from harassment, from unscrupulous employers, and from criminal elements that may target day workers. Importantly, the ability of local law enforcement to direct workers and employers to day labor centers is very helpful as a means for police and sheriffs to respond to complaints that may arise from street corner solicitations for employment.

In some communities, police have helped educate day laborers about their rights and helped mediate nonpayment disputes with employers. In Graton, the local sheriff's office assisted employers to find and use the day labor center and encouraged them to refrain from hiring people off the street. The sheriff's office also facilitated the posting of signs by the Public Works Department that direct people to the center.

When Los Altos passed an ordinance against begging on the streets, the police chief visited the director of the nearby day labor center to provide assurances that this was not meant to target day laborers seeking work. The San Mateo County Sheriff reports that his relationship with the local day worker program helps him to effectively provide information to day laborers, and that day workers are now more likely to report crimes.

Having a police officer on the board and steering committee of the Mountain View Day Worker Center has helped bridge the gap between day workers and law enforcement in that community. Holding weekly sidewalk talks with local law enforcement is another strategy for maintaining positive community relations between a day labor center and the surrounding community.

Los Angeles police officers and day labor center staff meet weekly with workers outside the day labor centers for informal discussions. This allows the police to communicate any complaints they have received from the community and also gives workers an opportunity to talk to police about any difficulties they may have. In this way, day laborers can learn about trespassing laws, their rights and the rights of business owners in a non-threatening atmosphere. Workers are educated and encouraged to report crimes such as wage theft. These informal practices help police solve crimes and spend less time responding to public nuisance complaints. It also helps day laborers maintain positive relations with law enforcement and the community.

Maintaining successful relationships between a day labor center and law enforcement can be challenging, especially if there are divisions in the community and among political leadership about a day labor center's role or existence. However, frank and ongoing communication is essential in all situations, as these are relationships that can affect both the operation and reputation of a day labor center. Effectively and continuously working on a collaborative strategy for centers and law enforcement to inform and engage the other will help generate more trust, fewer misunderstandings, and a will and capacity to address problems when they occur.

Funding and Support

Although reduced by the many budget-related challenges facing local agencies, a number of day labor centers receive funding support from or through their city or county. This may take the form of a line item in the local agency budget, or a contract for a service agreement. For instance, the Day Worker Center of Mountain View is supported by a number of local agencies, including: Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Palo Alto, Mountain View and Santa Clara County.

Supportive local policies can also contribute to successful center day labor operations. For instance, the Los Angeles City Council passed an ordinance that requires any new home-

improvement stores of a certain size to develop a plan to address the day labor presence the store will attract.

Local governments can implement policies that both support day labor center goals and help the community to proactively address potential day worker-related controversies.

As funding and supportive policies are critical for a day labor center's operation, the relationship between a center and its local government(s) has to be a central concern. This is true for both partners of course; the center and the local agency funding source. These relationships should be characterized by frank and ongoing communication, a forthright acknowledgement of concerns if and as soon as they occur, and becoming as aware as possible about each other's responsibilities, needs and constraints.

This will create a culture of greater collaboration with direct and indirect impacts on effective funding and fundraising. These relationships should never just exist on paper; they require face to face meetings with the individuals involved, and a willingness to pick up the phone or Blackberry to ask questions, give a "heads-up," or address a problem together.

Center Services

Local government agencies provide social, health and other services - and resources - that may be helpful to day workers and could be integrated into those services that are provided through a day labor center.

For instance, in San Francisco, the Health Department provides curriculum to teach classes of domestic workers, organized through a day labor center, how to avoid using toxic cleaning supplies.

The Graton Day Labor Center works with the Sonoma County Library Adult Literacy Program to provide workers with English language tutoring.



Day worker at the Downtown Los Angeles Day Labor Center learns bicycle repair skills.

In Los Angeles, a day labor center partnered with the LA Water Department to train workers to help water department customers to install water-saving irrigation systems. Center staff translated materials for a specialized gardening training program and helped shape the training for day laborers. These workers now have additional employment skills and opportunities.

In a report, *Day Labor Worker Report: Santa Cruz County*, the report's authors recommend the development of partnerships to enhance program delivery for a (then) proposed Santa Cruz County day labor worker center. They make the point that obtaining temporary employment is "a very short fix" and that improving job skills and individual leadership skills, as well as receiving basic health services, adds and supports pathways into the mainstream economy.

In any such undertaking it is helpful to remember that in most cases the primary interest of day workers is securing employment.

Communications

There are numerous ways that local officials and agencies can support information sharing and messages that day labor centers find useful, as there are opportunities for local governments to communicate through day labor centers to reach day workers.

A local government can promote day labor centers to potential employers, including the public, through local government media such as websites, local newspaper columns, blogs, newsletters, etc. Public service announcements posted in local businesses have helped day labor centers attract day worker employers. Center staff also report that having a municipal logo on their signs and flyers adds legitimacy to their education and outreach efforts.

Addressing Day Labor Center Conflicts

Establishing or operating a day labor center can generate controversy. Victor Narro, director of the University of California, Los Angeles Labor Center, recommends that communities facing controversy over a proposed or present day labor center project organize a series of three facilitated meetings. The importance of appropriate process, clear ground rules and good facilitation for these meetings can't be overemphasized.

The first meeting allows community members to register their concerns to local officials including law enforcement or other department representatives as appropriate - or to day labor center staff and representatives if a center already exists.

A second meeting is then held by day laborers, perhaps appropriate advocacy groups involved in day labor hiring, or (if there's an existing center) the day labor center staff, workers and/or other partners. They confer and consider the first meeting's input and how it might be addressed.

Before a third meeting is held, the center and its day workers - or workers and their supporters if no center yet exists - take clear steps to address and resolve community concerns to the degree possible. In the third meeting, the concerned residents, center staff, and day workers discuss the steps take to address concerns and how to move forward (either on the center's establishment or its ongoing operation). Local officials may play an observer role as appropriate; however, in any case, those who attend the first meeting should attend the third.

Many communities in California have used dialogue and problem solving approaches to address day worker center controversies. Graton used a year-long consensus process to reach agreements that led to its day labor center. In San Francisco, discussions between concerned residents and day labor center advocates resulted in a compromise agreement on the center's location.¹²

¹² Also see Toma, R. and Esbenshade, J., *Day Labor Hiring Sites; Constructive Approaches to Community Conflict*, 2001, for information on community conflict resolution, p.11.

Nonprofit and Community Service Providers

While day labor centers' primary goal is to help match people who need work with those in need of workers, most centers also help day workers connect with service providers. According to the labor director of the San Francisco Day Labor Program, providing services that help workers stay healthy, learn English skills and find opportunities for community engagement enhances their ability to secure more stable work. Many centers find that providers of legal services can also be extremely helpful to day laborers. However each center will access the needs of its own day laborers, and there is a wide variety of services that workers may find useful.



Workers at Los Angeles day labor centers develop and post rules and policies for each site.

Most centers lack the capacity to directly provide the range of services needed by day laborers. So, in addition to local government, centers turn to a range of nonprofit and (sometimes) for-profit service providers. This represents an additional important partnership - and collaborative approach - to operating a successful day labor center.

The services provided to workers through center partnerships with providers are extensive. A few such examples include:

- Health centers and clinics offer a range of health, dental and mental health services, as well as health information (such as dental hygiene, diet and nutrition, and working safely with toxins);
- Immigration legal service groups provide a range of legal advice, including help recovering unpaid wages, and immigrant and citizenship-related information;
- Food banks and other community groups distribute groceries to day laborers; and
- Employment assistance from job training and development groups take the form of computer and other professional training, the development of job seeking skills, and entrepreneurial training and assistance. A partnership with a local bicycle coalition in Los Angeles is helping day laborers learn how to repair and build their own bicycles.

It's also important to recognize the importance of clergy and congregations, as well as faith-based service and advocacy groups, as representing a key sector in developing effective and well-supported day labor center operations. The director of the Day Worker Center of Mountain View says faith leaders have important influence in the community and have proven to be strong allies for the center over the years. Congregations and faith-based groups also provide financial and social support. For instance, in Berkeley they provide a place for day workers to meet, and in Los Angeles they help connect day workers with needed service providers and provide groceries for needy workers.

The most successful partnerships between day labor centers and service providing organizations involve mutually beneficial relationships. Many communities have organizations that want to help low-income working people, including day laborers, but these groups often find it challenging to connect with day laborers due to language and cultural barriers.

Day labor centers can think strategically about the needs of day laborers and scan the range of community providers for good service matches. Well-developed relationships between the center and the service provider, including clear goals, the identified responsibilities of each entity, regular communications, and the ongoing evaluation of the services provided and the working relationship overall, will contribute to a successful collaborative effort.

The needs of workers will change over time of course, so there should be a regular review of the services provided that supplement immediate opportunities for employment.

The Broader Community

Once a day labor center is established, the need for a good communications plan (see page 21 above) continues. It will be important to inform residents about the center's activities, address concerns and respond to rumors. As mentioned earlier, residents often know little about day workers or the role that day labor centers play, including the various services centers offer beyond employment opportunities. The importance of telling a center's story, and the stories of the day workers themselves, shouldn't be neglected.



Day Worker Center of Mountain View welcomes community to open house.

Multi-sector committees or task forces, that may have been formed initially to organize or promote a center's establishment, can also be very helpful in supporting and sustaining a center over time. The City of Los Angeles Day Labor Program manager, for instance, recommends quarterly stakeholder meetings once a center is operational.

Such entities can have a range of different relationships to a center's own formal governance structure of course, and can be composed primarily of diverse, multi-sector community stakeholders, or have membership that is strongly representative of a center's supporters, workers and service providers. As each day labor center and community is different, each center will have its unique needs and will determine its own approach in how to involve the community.

However, a committee or advisory group that is broadly representative of community stakeholders and sectors, and that is kept well-informed of the center's purpose, values and operations, can be an extremely useful forum and sounding board for both the center and as a forum for others in the community as the need arises.

Whether as a permanent or a temporary mechanism, if organized correctly, such a group can help a day labor center to:

- Surface and help address new and ongoing challenges;
- Reflect on current policy and operations and add their insights;
- Identify new community partners, including employers; and
- Improve relations between a center and the community where it is located.

Staff at one day labor center in Southern California report that task force meetings have improved community relations and helped to generate more support for the center. They invited city council members, local business owners (including the owner of the building they lease for the center), police and the neighborhood council to take part in an ongoing task force and conversation.

Local business owners now come to the center to hire workers, or to seek assistance in talking to day laborers congregating outside their shops. Police help distribute flyers to workers and employers on the streets and encourage them to use the center, and a staff person from the center rides with a police officer one morning each month to talk to workers on the streets about the center. Center staff observed that city officials made it more of a priority to support the center once they were a part of the center's task force.

Schools and Universities

Partnerships with educational institutions can provide day laborers with much-needed educational information and opportunities and give students a new understanding of the world of day labor, and (often) an opportunity to speak and practice another language. Examples include:

- Universities, two and four year colleges, professional schools, and high schools, offer a range of direct services to day laborers, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) training, chiropractic services, nutrition education, GED preparation, and help with creating workers' resumes, to name only a few.
- In many cases, students are the direct providers, receiving credit and experience for their work. In addition to direct services to workers, students also help with grant writing, organizing fundraising events and working to develop center websites.
- In an interesting program in Los Angeles, the University of Southern California partners with the LA downtown day labor center to teach day workers how to use their cell phones to make videos about their lives.

These few examples offer a variety of ideas for successful partnerships between day labor centers and educational institutions. As noted in the previous section, such relationships need to

be responsive to center and worker needs and characterized by clarity of purpose, good communication, and appropriate monitoring and assessment.

It is likely that every day labor center has schools and universities in its city, county or region. Offering these institutions opportunities to become collaborative partners can be of great benefit to students while extending center services and resources.

Employers

Maintaining a successful job center is fundamentally tied to employment opportunities.¹³ In many communities, much of the day labor market is linked to the customers of large home-improvement stores, truck rental companies, paint supply stores, and other such businesses. In some cases these are individuals and in some cases they are other businesses that employ large number of workers themselves, such as painting and landscaping companies or local vineyard and orchard owners.

In certain cases, centers have established informal relationships with retail businesses particularly home improvement stores, and negotiated how, when and where centers can advertise their services, or in some cases, approach prospective employers on-site. With one very large home improvement/supply store chain there were, for a time, more formal (and even funding) relationships established in some locations, but these no longer seem to exist. Such relationships (and the agreements made) may change over time as company policies evolve and new managers are hired.

Centers should in any case remain aware of those businesses that are, directly and indirectly, points of employment for their workers and strive to develop collaborative relationships with these businesses that are in the best interests of all. This assumes of course that a business has a good track record of fairness with those they hire.

Elements of such relationships may include developing, maintaining and updating a database of these employers, keeping abreast of their hiring needs, advertising center services to them, and asking for feedback on the center generally and on their satisfaction with day workers.

Centers may ask employers to fill out evaluations or they may have a staff member call and ask the employer for feedback. This kind of assessment can help centers determine if workers are being appropriately matched to jobs and whether there is a need to adjust the job distribution process or better prepare certain workers to satisfy client needs. Employers who hire workers at the Graton Day Labor Center are asked to rate both the center and the workers. The Day Worker Center of Mountain View calls all employers for feedback after the jobs are finished, and also invites employers to organizational celebrations as a way to express the center's appreciation.

¹³ Valenzuela, Abel, *Day Laborer Program Evaluation* (for the City of Los Angeles Community Development Department), p. 33.

Of course feedback can be a two-way street. Day labor centers can also inform business (and other) employers about the positive and negative experiences of day laborers who have worked for them. This can be an important part of an established relationship with regular and ongoing business employers.

It can also be important to think through the potential impacts on day laborers and the community of a *new* business opening in the city or county that may attract people wishing to hire day laborers. Working with the business, local officials, and others to proactively address the relevant issues and dynamics that may result can add to a center's positive reputation while adding to the number of the hiring opportunities for day workers.

IV. Collaborative Strategies: Final Thoughts

Experienced leaders of day labor centers, as well as local officials and others in California, report that collaborative efforts and partnerships are important to establish day labor centers, as well to support their operations and sustain their success over the longer term. This section offers a few final thoughts on making collaborations work, and on collaborative areas of special interest.

Pay Attention to Your Collaborative Relationships and Partnerships

The best advice may be to treat the partnerships and other collaborative efforts required for day labor center success as essential not peripheral tasks. Begin the relationships proactively, nurture them consistently, adapt them as the center develops, and assess their effectiveness as you go.

It is also useful to keep in mind the guidance suggested earlier in the *Introduction* about the basics of any successful organizational or group relationship:

- Do we understand (with our partners) the collaborative relationship in the same way?
- Have we done, and are we continuing to do, our homework to build common understanding and trust, and the clear roles, goals and communication and other processes needed to make the collaboration or partnership work?

Also, given turnover of center staff and board members, and of those in leadership positions with center partners, it is helpful to document agreements about collaborative work and strategies, including respective organizational responsibilities, relevant time tables, information sharing, and specific deliverables.

It is also useful to not only assess the success of present partnerships but to consider if there are other groups, organizations or communities who have are not yet connected to the day labor center, but whose knowledge, resources and capacities, might enhance the center's services and long term success.

Keep Communicating

Building community understanding and support for day labor centers among local residents and business owners is an ongoing process that does not end once a center opens its doors. Experience suggests that there is a need for centers to continue efforts to promote an understanding of the center's purposes and operations, and of day workers themselves.

A part of this effort may be accomplished through a center's relationship with key stakeholders and other organizations connected to its work, but most residents and businesses will fall

outside these circles. While such attention to a broader communications effort stretches the definition of a collaborative strategy, it is too important to neglect.

Each day labor center, within its respective capacity, should have developed a communications plan consisting of key messages, primary audiences, and the vehicles through which it will deliver its messages to the desired audiences. Taking the time to first think through a center's most important messages to the community is particularly important.

Messages can be transmitted in any number of ways, such as the center's website or newsletter; a local paper or radio station; presentations to local neighborhood groups, service clubs and merchant associations; mailing to local clergy and congregations; other organizations' e-newsletters; city or county websites; a center open house, and much more.

"We invite the surrounding community to be a part of the center," according to a downtown Los Angeles day labor center staff member. "We join neighborhood council meetings, build relationships there and invite people to the job center. Once they know us they feel like they can get involved."

Providing information about day laborers themselves including individual stories (respecting privacy as appropriate) can be effective. And having day workers involved in making presentations to community groups, congregations and others can also be a very effective part of a communication effort.

Foster Worker Leadership

As described earlier, involving day workers in day labor center planning offers many benefits. Creating a formal and sustaining way to identify, develop and recognize new leaders among day laborers is another way to maintain successful day labor centers. Simply imposing rules and regulations on workers doesn't work in the long run, according to the director of the Day Worker Center of Mountain View. She suggests that workers need to take positions of leadership, responsibility and management in a center, and they must work together to market their services in order to succeed.

Providing training for workers is an important part of developing their leadership skills. Centers can often partner with community and leadership development organizations that can help develop day workers' specific expertise in areas such as public speaking, marketing, media relations, mediation and more. In San Francisco, La Raza Centro Legal designed a 10-week course that teaches day laborers how to be legal advocates for themselves and their fellow workers.

Day worker populations may be significantly transient in some communities, and this can make



Day workers at the Downtown Los Angeles Day Labor Center produce their own online radio broadcasts.

leadership development more of a challenge. There need to be ongoing efforts to identify and support new leaders to overcome this challenge. Centers that serve workers who speak a variety of languages and come from diverse backgrounds face additional challenges to ensure support for representative leadership development.

Despite these challenges, many day labor centers in California benefit from significant worker leadership. An elected commission of six to ten workers is responsible for day-to-day operations of the Mountain View center, and four day workers serve on the center's board of directors. Workers also raised about \$20,000 toward the cost of a new building to house the center.

At the San Francisco Day Labor Center, workers elect a team of six of their peers to be coordinators to help guide their center programs. Workers also play important outreach and peer training roles in the organization.

Learn From Other Day Labor Centers and Organizations

While perhaps a different kind of collaboration, day labor centers will benefit by staying in touch with other centers and with regional and national organizations whose research and experience will continue to inform day labor center best practices.

Whether getting underway or already well established, every day labor center in California will be able learn something from the experiences of another. Center staff, local officials and others interested in day labor center start-up and success should ensure that communication with centers in other communities is standard procedure for center planners, center leadership and center sponsors. Interviews with centers themselves suggest the need for such exchanges. For instance, in *Bay Area Day Labor Programs: Services, Political Environment and Priorities*, prepared for the Zellerbach Family Foundation, the report's authors note the unanimous interest among (day labor) programs in their area of study for a conference and a regional network."¹⁴

Day labor centers in California can also benefit from relationships with national and other organizations such as the National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON), the Instituto de Educacion Popular del Sur de California (IDEPSCA), and the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA). Relationships with national and regional day labor organizations can provide access to experience, research studies and other data that can help interested communities to successfully pursue an organized approach to the hiring of day workers.

These organizations also provide resources, such as communications and advertising materials, that can be adapted for use by any day labor center. They also provide useful advice and information that help workers understand their rights and protect themselves from employer abuses. For example, IDEPSCA distributes a Spanish-language pamphlet to day workers that

¹⁴ Alindor, Y. and Avidan, L. (ed.), *Bay Area Day Labor Programs: Services, Political Environment and Priorities*, p.i.

offers instructions on how to document the hours worked and who to contact for support if they are not paid fairly.

In Summary

It is useful to remember that collaborative efforts can:

- strengthen the chances for a day labor center's initial development;
- build a center's knowledge about its key audiences;
- increase the opportunities for attracting and keeping employers;
- enhance the range of useful services that respond to day worker needs;
- develop community understanding and support;
- help to attract funding; and
- add to a center's ability to adapt to meet the challenges of a changing environment.

As stated earlier, remember to begin day labor center relationships proactively, nurture them consistently, adapt them as the center develops, and assess their effectiveness as you go. There are no guarantees of course, but it is extremely likely that attention to the collaboration, partnerships and communications efforts described in this guide will advance day labor center success.

Resources and Further Reading

Bay Area Day Labor Programs: Services, Political Environment, and Priorities, Zellerbach Family Foundation.

http://www.zellerbachfamilyfoundation.org/pdfs/labor_report.pdf

Building Community: The Components of a Day Labor Worker Center Model, National Day Labor Organizing Network. <http://www.ndlon.org/resources/buildingcommunity.pdf>

City of Los Angeles Day Laborer Program Fact Sheet.

http://www.ca-ilg.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/resources_FACT_SHEET_Day_Labor_revised_December_2009_City_of_LA.pdf

Day Labor Centers and Community Outcomes, UCLA Center for Study of Urban Poverty.

<http://www.csup.ucla.edu/publications/Day%20Labor%20Centers%20and%20Community%20Outcomes%20-COMLETE.pdf>

Day Labor Hiring Sites: Constructive Approaches to Community Conflict, Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission.

<http://www.lahumanrelations.org/publications/docs/Day%20Laborer%20All.pdf>

Day Labor in the Golden State, Public Policy Institute of California.

http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/cep/EP_707AGEP.pdf

Day Labor Work, UCLA Center for Urban Poverty, Professor Abel Valenzuela, Jr.

<http://www.ca-ilg.org/node/3471>

In Pursuit of the American Dream: Day Labor in the Greater Washington D.C. Region, UCLA Center for the Study of Urban Poverty.

<http://www.ca-ilg.org/node/3470>

Institute for Local Government. www.ca-ilg.org/daylaborcenters

- *Collaborative Strategies for Day Labor Centers: Relationships, Partnerships and Processes to Enhance Success*. www.ca-ilg.org/collaborativestrategiesfordaylaborcenters
- Roster of California Day Labor Centers. www.ca-ilg.org/daylaborcenterroster

On the Corner: Day Labor in the United States, University of California, Los Angeles, Professor Abel Valenzuela, Jr.

http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/issr/csup/uploaded_files/Natl_DayLabor-On_the_Corner1.pdf

Worker Centers: Organizing Communities at the Edge of the Dream, Economic Policy Institute and Cornell University Press. <http://www.policyarchive.org/handle/10207/bitstreams/8085.pdf>

Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey, Amherst H Wilder Foundation. www.fieldstonealliance.org

V. Acknowledgements

The Institute for Local Government is grateful to the following individuals who volunteered their time to serve as an informal advisory committee for this project:

- John Arvizu, Development Director, National Day Labor Organizing Network (NDLON)
- Lina Avidan, Program Executive, Zellerbach Family Foundation
- Davin Cardenas, Lead Organizer, Graton Day Labor Center
- Suzanne Foster, Executive Director, Pomona Day Labor Center
- Rose Jacobs Gibson, District 4 County Supervisor, County of San Mateo
- Rod Gould, City Manager, City of Santa Monica
- María Marroquín, Executive Director, Day Worker Center of Mountain View
- Abel Valenzuela Jr., Professor, Chicana/o Studies and Urban Planning, University of California, Los Angeles

The Institute is also grateful to these community leaders who volunteered their time to be interviewed for this report:

- Joel Aguiar, Director, San Francisco Day Labor Program
- Raul Anorve, Executive Director, Instituto de Educacion Popular del Sur de California (IDEPSCA)
- Jose Calderon, Professor of Sociology and Chicano/a-Latino/a Studies, Pitzer College
- Efren Carrillo, District 5 County Supervisor, County of Sonoma
- Suzanne Foster, Executive Director, Pomona Day Labor Center
- Michael Kasperzak, Council Member, City of Mountain View
- Job Lopez, Day Laborer and Organizer, Day Worker Center of Mountain View
- Frank Meir, Day Labor Program Manager, City of Los Angeles Community Development Department
- Marlon Portillo, Worker Health Program Manager, IDEPSCA
- Flor Rodriguez, Day Worker Center Director, IDEPSCA
- Hillary Ronen, Legislative Aide to San Francisco District 9 Supervisor David Campos
- Renee Saucedo, Lead Facilitator, San Francisco Day Labor Program
- Kevin Woodhouse, Assistant City Manager, City of Mountain View
- Paula Worby, DrPH, MPH, Associate Director, The Multicultural Institute
- Christina Zapata, Executive Director, Graton Day Labor Center

The Institute also gratefully acknowledges the following individuals who reviewed this document and offered their comments prior to publication:

- Salud Carbajal, District 1 County Supervisor, County of Santa Barbara
- Tim Giles, City Attorney, City of Goleta
- Rod Gould, City Manager, City of Santa Monica
- Mike Kasperzak, Vice Mayor, City of Mountain View
- Maria Marroquin, Executive Director, Day Worker Center of Mountain View

The Institute also acknowledges Greg Keidan for the interviews, research and writing that contributed to this publication.

This publication is a service of the Institute for Local Government (ILG) whose mission is to promote good government at the local level with practical, impartial, and easy-to-use resources for California communities. ILG is the nonprofit 501(c)(3) research and education affiliate of the League of California Cities and the California State Association of Counties. For more information and to access the Institute's resources on public engagement and collaborative governance, go to www.ca-ilg.org/engagement. To access this resource, go to www.ca-ilg.org/collaborativestrategiesfordaylaborcenters.

The Institute welcomes feedback on this resource:

- *Email:* info@ca-ilg.org Subject: *Collaborative Strategies for Day Labor Centers*
- *Fax:* 916.444.7535
- *Mail:* 1400 K Street, Suite 205 ▪ Sacramento, CA ▪ 95814