Economic and Workforce Development Needs of Costa Mesa Day Laborers

Cassandra Kifer

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Department of Planning, Policy, and Design
University of California, Irvine

CLIENT:
Crissy Brooks, Executive Director
Mika Community Development Corporation - Costa Mesa, California

FACULTY CHAIR:
Mireille Jacobsen, Ph.D., Department of Planning, Policy, and Design

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Problem Statement

Across the country, day laborers are a highly visible contingent of workers in low-income, primarily immigrant communities. The establishment of worker centers to organize and facilitate day labor hiring, has been a common practice in recent decades. Mika Community Development Corporation, a non-profit organization in Costa Mesa, California, will open such a center for local workers, to be called the Center for Resources and Employment Opportunities (CREO). CREO (Spanish for, “I believe”), will combine the hiring-hall function of a former Costa Mesa job center with additional workforce development and community services that low-wage workers on the Westside of Costa Mesa (Westside) need. The planning of this center was initiated after the closing of the city-funded facility in 2005.

This report will examine economic development and job skill training needs of Westside day laborers. This information will be used to plan workforce development programs and services at the proposed job center. This study will conduct in-depth surveys of a selection of local day laborers (potential users) regarding economic and workforce development needs. This study will also examine economic and workforce development services currently available in the local area.

Objectives

This report is intended to gather a broad range of information for Mika CDC to assist in service planning for CREO. This report has the following objectives:
1. Identify job skill deficiencies of Costa Mesa day laborers.

2. Document existing services in Costa Mesa and surrounding communities available to fill the above-mentioned needs.

3. Identify service coverage gaps and recommend a prioritization of services that Mika CDC may provide.

**Significance of the Project**

The closing of the Costa Mesa Job Center in 2005 has adversely affected local workers and residents of the Westside. Since the site was closed, laborers have returned to public street corners and commercial parking lots in search of work. This system of hiring is inefficient and unequal. The visibility of the workers on the streets may also pose a crime hazard, as immigrant workers are sometimes conspicuous targets for criminal violence and robbery (Bulwa, 2007). Additionally, the presence of workers on the street is disruptive to the local community who consider the workers a nuisance and/or a threat to public safety.

The CREO job center was visualized to help both the workers and the general community. This comprehensive center will give job-seekers a safe place to congregate, off the streets. The center will also offer additional services such as computer skills training, construction/landscape training, labor rights training, and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses which can help workers become more marketable to employers, attain higher wages, and find more sustainable positions.

The results of this study will help Mika CDC plan and prioritize the center’s services, based on the specific needs of Westside Costa Mesa workers. This targeted
planning is expected to increase the employability of job center users and, consequently, raise the standard of living of workers and their families.
Chapter 2
Background

Day Labor Work and the National Day Labor Study

Temporary day work, or day labor, has been a part of the American economy throughout history. Literature shows that as early as 1834, space was set aside on city streets where individuals seeking work could meet with those who wanted workers (Martinez, 1973). Valenzuela (1999) cites numerous examples in California dating back to years prior to the 1920’s, including agricultural workers being recruited from city centers, a supply of Mexican workers readily available on one street corner of Santa Barbara, and the area of downtown Los Angeles (then known as “Sonoratown”) being a magnet for Mexican immigrants seeking temporary work.

Though widespread, this phenomenon was little understood until recent years. Three noted economic development, planning, and policy professors, Abel Valenzuela, Jr. (UCLA), Nik Theodore (University of Illinois, Chicago), and Edwin Meléndez (New School University, NY) conducted this large-scale assessment, known as the National Day Labor Study, or NDLS (Valenzuela et al., 2006). The researchers interviewed 2,660 workers at 264 hiring sites in 20 states and the District of Columbia. The results of this survey describe who the workers are, the kind of work they do, and the labor market in which they exist. Unless cited otherwise, all information in this section is from this study.

Day laborers are almost exclusively (98 percent) male and primarily (87 percent) migrants from Mexico and Central America. On most days you can find these workers (jornaleros, in Spanish) on the streets of many urban and suburban communities. Day
Day laborers often have limited education and skills, thus they frequently seek work in manual duties of construction and landscaping, including cleaning, gardening, painting, and demolition. For 83 percent of workers, this work is their sole source of income, for which they usually search fulltime. Workers rise in the early hours of the morning and congregate at busy street corners and in parking lots of business, such as hardware and convenience stores (see Figure 1). They wait at these locations until employers approach the group. At this point the workers “swarm” the vehicle, rushing toward the driver hoping to be the first to arrive (Figure 2).
Workers explain that this practice is prompted by employers motioning to them from inside the vehicle, and then, often, hiring the first person to arrive at the vehicle (Day Labor Research Institute, n.d.).

Day labor work is generally poorly paid, unstable, and provides no benefits. The median hourly wage for workers is $10, significantly higher than the federal minimum wage. However, this employment is extremely unstable, resulting in high fluctuations in monthly earnings. Median monthly earnings during peak work periods (summer months) are $1,400 while in slow periods they fall to only $500. Even if a worker gets extremely lucky in acquiring work, his annual income is not likely to exceed the federal poverty level.

Employer abuses such as non-payment, violence, and excessively dangerous work are frequent occurrences for day laborers. Almost half of all workers had recently experienced at least one instance of non-payment. Sometimes the money is flatly denied, or the payment is less than what was agreed upon. Other times, the employer will spread a rumor that Immigration and Naturalization Service agents are in the area, causing workers to scatter before getting paid (Skinner, 2006). Forty-four percent were denied food, water or breaks while on the job. In some cases workers have described being threatened with violence and being forced to work at gunpoint (Skinner, 2006).

As undocumented workers are more likely to be exploited and excluded from formal worker protections, they are at higher risk of work related injury and abuse (Walter et al., 2002). Moreover, because they typically lack health insurance and are denied access to many social services, their injuries are more likely to go unattended. The NDLS showed that one in five workers has suffered a work related injury while performing day labor work, and more than half of those injured never received medical
care. More than two thirds of injured laborers lost time from work because of their injuries. Workers say that they are often put into these situations because formal employees were unwilling to do these jobs. Compounding this problem, day laborers are often insufficiently trained and not given appropriate protective equipment to perform this work safely.

**Economic Context**

In recent decades, restructuring of the urban economy and globalization have caused stagnant growth of high-paying jobs in the manufacturing sector, and a rapid increase of relatively low-paying jobs in the service sector (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007; Blumenberg, 2006). Part of this shift has included an increase in temporary, contingent employment (hiring workers only when there is an immediate need for their service), and growth of the informal economy (Sassen, 1998). This includes an increase in the number of companies that hire part-time, short-term, contract, and contingent workers through formal (temporary agencies, hiring halls) and informal (street-side) methods.

The skills required of these jobs are lower making them more accessible to a wide range of people, including those with limited education and abilities, such as recent immigrants. However, the pay and benefits of these positions are also significantly lower than the jobs they replaced. Service workers earn on average only three quarters what manufacturing employees did (Blumenberg, 2006). Regardless, the rapid pace of unauthorized immigration in recent years (Hoefer, Rytina, & Campbell, 2005) has provided a steady supply of workers to fill these and other similarly marginal positions.
Due to these factors, it is not surprising that in recent years there has been an increased demand for day laborers. Construction and landscaping contractors, as well as individual homeowners, have capitalized on the abundance of laborers willing to work these as-needed positions. In addition to the flexibility this hiring strategy offers, cost savings are significant, as employers are not required to pay benefits and the pay rate itself is negotiable. Due to these factors, this segment of the labor industry has more than doubled between 1990 and 1997 (Peck & Theodore, 2001). A study by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2001) estimated that approximately 260,000 workers nationally wait on street corners seeking employment.

Unorganized, street-side hiring is often considered a suboptimal way for workers to find employment. This system is difficult for both the workers and neighboring communities. The race to the vehicle is a highly unequal means of allocating work, as equally skilled, yet slower or older workers will attain work less often. Day labor corners are frequently cleared by the police, ticketing the workers for violations of loitering and anti-solicitation ordinances. These clearances scatter the workers and end the day’s opportunity to find work.

Standing on the corner also sets workers up as potential targets for crime. In recent years there has been an increase of violence and robbery against immigrant workers because it is perceived that these individuals are likely to be carrying cash. On a recent morning, a day laborer was robbed and murdered while seeking work on an Oakland, California street corner (Bulwa, 2007).

Additionally, these congregations often cause nearby residents or businesses to complain of noise, traffic disruption, and public safety. These concerns are the reason for the creation of the original City of Costa Mesa Job Center, as well as the establishment of
ordinances prohibiting employment solicitation on public streets and in commercial parking lots (City of Costa Mesa, 2007).

For all of the above reasons, organizing workers into a dedicated location for hiring is a solution communities often choose to take.

**Worker Centers**

Worker Centers are community-based institutions that provide diverse forms of support for low-income workers. The primary goal of such centers is usually hiring assistance. Additionally, many centers offer other services targeted to the needs of the mostly low-income and low-skill immigrant workers. These services include legal representation, ESL, and access to health care. The centers may provide programming to build employable skills, such as construction, landscaping, or trade training. The centers often advocate for workers in relation to specific employer abuses, and sometimes for more generalized conditions of low-wage industries, necessary legal change, and improved government monitoring. Finally, they organize workers, build leadership and encourage workers to take action for themselves. Worker alliances often set the rules for the center, including minimum wages for different categories of jobs. The focus on organizing and worker empowerment is the aspect that sets these centers apart from traditional worker assistance or immigrant service organizations (Fine, 2006).

Formal hiring sites specifically for day laborers are a relatively recent phenomenon and almost all centers have been established since 1995 (Valenzuela et al., 2006). These centers are usually located near the informal site, ensuring that they are accessible to both workers and employers. The majority of centers are operated by
community organizations (68%), while city governments and church groups operate 16% each (Valenzula, 2006).

The best centers do more than just match employers with workers. By improving skills, limiting abuses and dangers, and maximizing the frequency and pay of work, these centers take a holistic approach to improving the lives of the workers they serve.

**Westside Costa Mesa**

The low-income Westside neighborhoods of Costa Mesa, California, exemplify the massive demographic shift occurring in older communities throughout California and the nation in the past two decades. During this time, the population has more than doubled. With this growth has come a lower median household income and a higher proportion of immigrant, Latino residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). These factors plus inadequate employment, lack of affordable housing, high rates of drug use, crime, teen drop-outs and delinquency, have created social conditions that have been challenging and, at times, overwhelming for the community.

The Westside (see Figure 3) is bounded by Fairview Regional Park and the Costa
Mesa Country Club to the north, the Santa Ana River to the west, the City of Newport Beach to the south, and Newport and Harbor Boulevards to the east. The size of the area is approximately 2.8 square miles.

The Westside is a primarily immigrant, economically disadvantaged community, characterized by low-income households and a workforce with limited education. From 1980 to 2000, the population of the Westside expanded by 120 percent from 16,711 to 36,953. During the same period, Westside neighborhood demographics have shifted from 18 percent to over 56 percent Latino (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The change is even more dramatic in local schools. The student body in four of five Westside elementary and intermediate schools ranges from 91 to 97 percent Latino (COPC, n.d.), almost 80 percent of students are not fluent in English and over 90 percent of students come from low-income families (Leal, 2005). Close to sixty percent of households speak a language other than English at home. This increased density and shifting demographic have included a high number of low-income, economically disadvantaged residents.

Being a largely immigrant community, Westside residents may also lack skills necessary to acquire higher paying, more sustainable employment. Immigrant communities tend to be less educated, have workers who earn lower wages and lack skills needed to advance. Immigrants make up only 11 percent of all U.S. residents, but are 20 percent of low-wage workers (Capps et al., 2003). In 2000, the average household income among Hispanic Westside residents was $29,323 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). On the Westside, 37 percent of workers over the age of 25 have less than a high school education (COPC, n.d.).

In addition to these difficulties, the Westside lacks social support services and community organization infrastructure to serve these problems locally. Agencies that
have been providing these services often struggle with a lack of leadership and support from within the local neighborhoods. Furthermore, local politics have made it difficult for social service agencies to provide assistance to the underprivileged.

Mika Community Development Corporation was founded in 2003 to build capacity within these local organizations, develop leaders within the community, identify needs and opportunities, and design programs to achieve these goals. The Neighborhood Action Committee is the foundation of Mika CDC’s efforts on the Westside. Mika CDC’s staff interacts with neighborhood residents and identifies individuals with established or potential leadership capabilities. Mika then supports these individuals in efforts to organize residents through weekly meetings, community forums, neighborhood clean-ups, and local service activities. These individuals develop relationships with local community members, and gain a complete understanding of community strengths and weaknesses, which allows Mika CDC to develop programs and engage in capacity building. The network is intended to be the primary system of collaboration and support in the community.

Mika CDC has established successes in diverse programs that have grown out of these neighborhood organizing efforts. These programs include after-school tutoring, youth arts classes, a youth job skill training program, and adult ESL classes. When the opportunity arose to take on leadership of the job center campaign, Mika CDC was well-suited due to its respected reputation within and understanding of Westside neighborhoods.

Costa Mesa Job Center
The City of Costa Mesa opened a hiring center for day laborers in 1988 (see Figure 4). The reasons given for the job center were: 1) to relieve community concerns about workers congregating in parks and streets when looking for work, 2) to provide workers with jobs suited to their skills, 3) to hold employers accountable for the legal and ethical treatment of workers, and 4) to provide a clearinghouse for local employers seeking workers (City of Costa Mesa, 2002). This center operated for 16 years until March 15, 2005, when the City Council voted to close the center effective June 30, 2005 (City of Costa Mesa, 2005a). The closure was later extended to the final date of December 31, 2005 (City of Costa Mesa, 2005b).

The Council majority stated that the center’s cost of operation was not justified (Martinez, 2005). The 2005 fiscal year budget for the job center was $102,967, which represents 2.72% of the Recreation budget and 0.12% of the General Fund (City of Costa Mesa, 2005). In its years of operation, the council had regularly expressed concerns that
not all workers and employers using the center were city residents. Additionally, the center didn’t seem to have a high rate of hiring. At the time of closing, the center had 1,374 registered workers, and 110 workers showed up each morning to seek work. In 2001, workers signed into the center 32,007 times and 11,017 hires were completed between employers and workers (Martinez, 2005).

Despite the stated rationale, some community members feel the City of Costa Mesa harbors an underlying hostility to immigrant residents. In December 2005, the same month the job center closed permanently, the city council voted 3-2 to approve training city police to enforce federal immigration law (Overley, 2005). Costa Mesa was the first city in the country to take this step. Mayor Allan Mansoor, the driving force of this decision, stated, “I don't see how anyone can object to this. This is the very least that the American public expects from its elected officials and its law enforcement” (Dobbs, 2005). This decision has placed the city at the center of the national immigration debate.

In an interview on CNN’s Lou Dobbs Tonight, Councilwoman Katrina Foley, one of two members who voted against this decision stated the policy is inefficient and divisive, will lead to distrust of officers, and prevent officers from focusing on actual neighborhood policing (2005). This opinion was shared by community members as well as the former Chief of Police, who retired amidst the controversy, though he denied the policy was a factor in his decision (Edds, 2006).

These issues are still hotly debated in the city following reelection of Mansoor in November 2006, as well as appointment of a new Chief of Police, Christopher Shawkey, who agreed to implement the immigration-enforcement policy and who applied for the position highlighting his experience dealing with the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Border Patrol (Therolf, 2006). Regardless of this initiative’s outcome, the
Westside community has little faith in local government’s efforts to address day laborer concerns on the Westside.

**Center for Resources and Employment Opportunities (CREO)**

Upon the decision that the city would close the Costa Mesa Job Center, many members of the public were concerned that the closure would cause the same issues that originally prompted the creation of the center to return. Workers expressed concern that on the streets they would have less chance of finding work. Mika CDC, organized within and connected to the Westside community, understood the impacts this loss would have on workers and the neighborhood at large. Thus, the organization decided to plan and establish a new day labor center called the Center for Resources and Employment Opportunities (CREO), to provide a safe and effective space for finding work. In addition to serving as a hiring-hall, Mika would like to provide additional services such as ESL, vocational, and workers rights classes that can help workers develop skills needed to advance. As of April 2007, Mika is looking for a site for the new center. The organization has had some difficulty due to city zoning concerns, but they are looking to hire a dedicated staff coordinator to work more intensively on site acquisition and planning.

Soon after accepting responsibility for planning the new job center, Mika CDC partnered with the University of California, Irvine, Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC), to engage graduate students in early planning-related research. COPC worked with then UCI Master’s in Urban & Regional Planning Student, Lan Nguyen to examine other American worker centers with workforce development programs to provide examples of how similar programs may be implemented at CREO.
This report builds on the work of Nguyen’s study. While the former report looked at general examples of what can be done to promote workforce development at day labor workers centers, this report examines the specific needs of Costa Mesa workers, tailoring job center recommendations to the individual community.

**Needs Assessment**

A needs assessment is a tool for understanding a particular community and a technique commonly used in community development planning. Needs assessments are surveys intended to identify common weaknesses in a community, so that interested organizations can establish priorities for action (Reviere, 1996). These surveys are conducted when no relevant base of information is currently available.

In this study, Mika CDC wanted to better understand the lives of local day laborers in order to plan services at the proposed job center. A needs assessment was designed, focusing on economic and employment-related needs of laborers, as those are the areas best served by worker centers.
Chapter 3
Procedures

This project is a comprehensive assessment of the economic and employment development needs of day labor workers in Costa Mesa, as well as an inventory of existing workforce development services in the local area. The study was conducted in three steps, as follows:

1. Workforce Needs Assessment

This section defines the current economic status and needs of Westside day laborers, the potential users of the CREO facility.

A survey was prepared addressing a variety of information including current employment, income, living conditions, major expenses, education, self-assessed skills, self-assessed skill deficiencies, work acquisition strategies, work history, and knowledge of community resources. Survey methodology was adapted from that of Valenzuela’s studies of day laborers (1999, 2006, personal communication, November 14, 2006).

Administration of this assessment involved in-depth qualitative interviews, requiring precision in spoken Spanish. The author was assisted in these duties by UC Irvine undergraduate students Xochitl Quintero and Beatriz Sosa. Ms. Quintero is a fourth year Spanish major and Ms. Sosa is a fourth year Psychology major. Both students are fluent speakers of Spanish and assisted with document translation, recruitment, interviews, and transcription.

Upon translation, the survey was administered to a selection of adult (18+) day laborers. Workers were found in two locations in Costa Mesa, Placentia Avenue and 17th
Street (near site of the former Costa Mesa Job Center) and Placentia Avenue and Victoria Street (by the 7-11). These locations were identified by Mika CDC as sites where Westside day laborers congregate. A third site (PK Burger parking lot, at Center Street and Placentia Avenue) was identified by Mika, but workers were never spotted nearby.

Worker groups were approached by the study team on two early (7am) mornings in February. Workers were given a study information summary (see Appendices C and D), the study was verbally described, and volunteers recruited. Some workers expressed concern for confidentiality. Workers were assured that no personally-identifying information would be gathered, no individually identifiable photos would be taken, and that audio recordings of the interviews would be destroyed upon transcription. A modest sum ($25 cash) was offered to partially compensate for interview time (approximately one hour) as well as potentially lost employment for the day. Thirteen subjects were recruited on these mornings. Two additional interviews were arranged with Mika CDC worker contacts.

Consenting workers were taken to a nearby location where interviewer and subject could sit down (Burger House restaurant at the corner of Placentia and 17th, and a laundromat at Placentia and Victoria). Interviews were conducted using a qualitative (open-ended, in-depth) survey instrument (see Appendix A). Additional questions were asked by the interviewer to get the subject to elaborate, as needed (see Appendix B).

Interview recordings were then translated into English and recordings destroyed. Key economic and work-related themes or concerns were summarized for each individual interview. All interviews were compiled and collective themes identified.

It must be noted that the findings of non-randomly selected, qualitative assessments, such as this, cannot be generalized to the entire population. For example,
even if every worker interviewed in this study noted that their inability to speak English was an impediment to accessing more sustainable work, it could not be said that this is a problem for “all Costa Mesa day laborers”, only that it is likely a problem for many in the population. Primarily, these interviews are expected to elaborate in-depth on a variety of workers’ individual situations for the purpose of attaining a general understanding of the type of individual likely to frequent the new job center.

This survey was conducted during the low season for day labor work. Low season typically occurs from December to February, and is characterized by lower than average availability of many day labor employment opportunities (e.g., construction, landscape maintenance) during the cool, wet Southern California winter. For this reason, it is expected that there will be fewer workers standing on the corners, and the economic condition of the workers that are there may be more desperate, due to lack of other feasible employment options. This potential issue is not expected to be significant, because this study seeks only to attain a general understanding of local workers’ common concerns.

2. Local Resource Availability

This section identifies all workforce skill development and training programs currently available in the local area. This area is defined as a ten-mile radius from the center of the Westside of Costa Mesa (W. 19th Street and Placentia Avenue). Services examined include job search/placement services, literacy and language programming (e.g., GED, ESL, basic literacy), computer technology classes, public computer resources, occupational training (e.g., construction, landscaping, automotive repair), and
low-income workers’ medical and legal assistance resources. For each resource, relevant eligibility requirements, fees, and other information are listed.

3. Recommendations

This section overlays the information given above to identify current gaps in services and resources. The section lists recommended community services or development opportunities that Mika can provide through the CREO employment center. Mika CDC may then use these recommendations to plan and prioritize the center’s services, optimizing it to the needs of Westside Costa Mesa workers.
Chapter 4
Results

Workforce Needs Assessment

Fifteen individual worker interviews were conducted. Interviews #1 through 7 were completed on the morning of Wednesday, February 14, 2007, with laborers seeking work on the corner of Placentia Avenue and Victoria Street. Interviews #8 through 13 were conducted the morning of Saturday, February 17, 2007, with laborers seeking work at Placentia Avenue and 17th Street. Interviews #14 and 15 were conducted on Sunday, February 18, 2007, with workers referred by Mika CDC. All subjects were male except subject #12, who was a woman who formerly used the Costa Mesa Job Center to find employment in housekeeping and childcare.

All interviews were conducted in Spanish and recorded on audiocassettes. The interviews were later transcribed in English. Despite taking measures to prevent interference while recording (i.e., locating interview sites away from doors, ensuring the recorder was kept close to the subject) some recordings were more difficult to understand than others. When an excerpt of conversation was deemed indecipherable, the word “[unclear]” was entered on the transcript. When a question was skipped, the phrase “no answer” was entered on the transcript.

A brief summary of the worker interviews follows. Full transcripts are included as Appendix E.

Worker Demographics
Table 1 summarizes the main findings from the worker interviews. The subjects were on average 36.7 years old (ranging from 26 to 50). Almost all workers (13 out of 15) lived in the City of Costa Mesa, and all but one worker was originally from Mexico. The length of time interview subjects had spent in the United States ranged from 1.5 to 23 years, with an average of 8.6 years.

For almost all of the subjects interviewed, day labor work was their only source of employment. Only one subject, interviewed on a Saturday morning, had a regular, full-time job (working in a factory assembling vacuum cleaners), Monday through Friday.

The monthly expenses reported by the workers ranged from $370 to $4,000. Income reported was quite variable, due to the inherent instability of day labor work. Of those who reported it, average amounts ranged from $500 to $2,000. Many workers reported sending remittances to their home country, or paying to support other relatives in this country. The monthly amount of these payments ranged from $33 to $1,000.

A low level of education was characteristic of most workers interviewed. Two-thirds of the workers had less than an elementary level of formal education, though one worker had attained a post-graduate law degree in Mexico. English language fluency was also low. Only four out of 15 workers reported speaking ability of better than “a little.” All workers reporting English language ability had lived in the United States longer than 12 years. Only three workers reported knowing how to use a computer and the internet. Only two reported knowing where to find employment or job skill training services.

Workers expressed overwhelming support for the establishment of a new job center in Costa Mesa. Many workers were unhappy with the closing of the former center, and every worker interviewed said that they would be interested in using a new center, if established.
## Table 1. Worker Interview Summary

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<td>Speak more than &quot;a little&quot;?</td>
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<td>no</td>
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<td>Know job services?</td>
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<td>Other job than laborer?</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
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<td>Want new job center?</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
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<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
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### Issues

| English Language | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Abuse/Nonpayment | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Discrimination/Racism | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Steady Work/Higher Pay | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Police | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Medical Prob./Lack of Care | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |

### Abbreviations
- CM = Costa Mesa, CA
- GG = Garden Grove, CA
- M = Mexico
- H = Honduras
- ok = An "okay" monthly income.
- g = A "good" monthly income.
- b = A "bad" monthly income.
- y = Remittances sent only when worker was younger.
- ? = Doesn't know
- depends = Depends on how much work is available.
- elem = Finished elementary school.
- hs = Finished high school.
- law = Awarded a law degree.
Themes

Upon compiling the worker transcripts, an inventory of issues or concerns noted by the workers was prepared. Six main themes arose (see Table 1 for an identification of the interviews in which these issues appear). The themes are arranged as follows, in the order of frequency mentioned.

1. Need for Steady Work/Higher Pay

Lack of employment, irregularity of employment, or low rate of pay was mentioned by 12 subjects as one of the major concerns of Costa Mesa day laborers. Some noted the inherent instability of day labor work, as something they disliked about their job. Others expressed the belief that this was a problem that could be alleviated by the establishment of a new job center. These workers noted heightened difficulty attaining work after the former center closed and/or confidence that a new center would help them find work more frequently or at a higher rate of pay.

2. Abuse/Nonpayment (tie)

Worker abuse includes a broad range of complaints including nonpayment, payment of less than the agreed upon amount, working more hours than agreed, being abandoned at work site, verbal insults, or violence. Eleven workers mentioned either having experienced these issues (nonpayment, paying less than agreed or working longer hours than agreed) or being concerned that it may happen to them. One worker said he had been cheated out of an entire month of pay. Many workers noted the belief that a new job center would help alleviate
this problem because of increased pressure on employers to be accountable and/or action by center staff to contact abusive employers.

3. Police Interference (tie)

Eleven workers noted increased police presence on the street corners since the job center closed. Workers noted that Costa Mesa city police come to each site several times a week and sometimes up to four times a day. Police cause the workers to disperse and often ticket those who were left behind. The reason the police give for ticketing the workers was not ascertained through the interviews, but on the first day of field work, the author saw the police interrogate four workers, asking, “Are you looking for work? Are you waiting for someone to come hire you?” From this it is assumed the police are ticketing workers on the city’s non-solicitation ordinance.

Many workers said the police presence interferes with their ability to find work by scaring employers away. Others felt that day labor corner enforcement is a distraction for the police, and that the city would be best served by having the workers off the street, allowing the police to focus on more serious community concerns. All workers felt having a new job center would alleviate these problems by providing a place for workers to wait off of the streets.

4. English Language Ability

Ten of the 15 workers said that improving English language skills is a top priority for day laborers wanting to advance themselves. This ability was also linked other themes. Some workers mentioned that the ability to speak English
well contributes to your ability to acquire work more often, and can even make workers eligible for higher pay. Other workers mentioned a link between poor English skills and employer abuse. They stated that workers who do not speak English well are more likely to be taken advantage of by employers.

5. Medical Problems/Lack of Care

Only a few workers had ever experienced on the job injuries and only one worker considered his injury significant. Regardless, it became apparent many workers did not know where they could go to receive medical care if needed. One worker said, “Doctors are completely out of the question”.

The Share Our Selves (SOS) Free Clinic provides free medical care for uninsured, otherwise ineligible community members such as the homeless or undocumented, and is located a short distance from either day labor corner. Even when asked specifically about SOS, many workers said they had never heard of it. A total of nine workers expressed lack of knowledge about health care services available to them.

6. Discrimination/Racism

Three workers mentioned being troubled by racism or discrimination in the community and from employers. One worker mentioned being told by American co-workers on a work assignment to go back to his country. Another mentioned a time he was insulted and attacked by Americans when working on a job in Fresno. Another worker said he felt the men were looked down upon while
standing on the streets, and that the community views them as delinquents or criminals.

Other Ideas

In addition to the language skills noted above, several specific vocational skills or occupations were mentioned by workers as things they felt training in would help them advance. In order of frequency: painting (mentioned 4x), plumbing (3x), carpentry (3x), electrical (2x), computer (2x), retail (2x), reading construction plans, putting in floors, window washing, prep cook, and how to open their own business.

A functional idea given for the proposed job center was to have a job skill database to help employers find appropriate workers more easily, and ensure that workers with those skills are paid adequately. A number of workers identified the importance of the job center in building positive relationship with employers, increasing employers’ use of the center, and consequently, increasing jobs available.

Additional needed services workers identified were domestic violence assistance, alcoholism treatment/counseling, and sexually transmitted disease (STD) testing.

Broad-scale policy changes to improve living conditions were noted as important to some of the workers. Two workers mentioned that immigration reform and legalization of workers are one of the most important things local day laborers need. Three other workers mentioned that having a driver’s license would help them advance, because it would allow them access to more day labor as well as mainstream employment opportunities.

Three subjects suggested that the local workers are fragmented and that they need to organize, unite, and build community. Three other subjects addressed the need for
help with acculturation, as new migrants struggle to adjust to life in the United States. Two of these workers identified this in terms of job skills, noting that tools and construction materials in the United States are different than they are in Mexico.

**Local Resource Availability**

The local workforce development resources available to Costa Mesa day laborers were divided into five categories: English as a Second Language (ESL) Programs, Health Services, Job Placement Services, Legal/Immigration Resources, and Vocational/Computer Resources. All resources were located within approximately 10 miles from the Westside (Placentia Street at 19th Street). The exception to this was legal and immigration resources, the most distant organization located in downtown Los Angeles. This is because it is assumed these resources will be utilized on an infrequent basis, and workers will be able to travel the distance in such circumstances.

This inventory is not intended to be inclusive of all employment and social services in Orange County. It focuses on vocational training programs likely to build on the expected skills of the target demographic: adult men with low levels of education and English language ability, and work experience in construction and other forms of low-skilled, manual labor. Additionally, it focuses on community services likely to be used by local day laborers, and that are available to low-income community members regardless of immigration status. All programs and services listed are either free or low-cost, as target workers have limited financial resources.

A summary of each category follows. A complete list of resources identified is provided as Appendix F.
**English as a Second Language (ESL) Programs:**

Ten programs offering ESL classes to local community members were identified within the local area. Five programs were in the City of Santa Ana, three in Costa Mesa, one in Huntington Beach, and one in Irvine. All classes are free of charge and open to anyone who resides in the local area (i.e. no city residency requirements). Only one program (Irvine Adult School) currently has a waiting list.

Programs were diverse in the number of levels offered, ranging from one mixed-level class, to seven or more classes, with assignments determined by comprehensive placement exam at registration. Both the Newport-Mesa and Huntington Beach Adult Schools offer distance learning programs. In this unique program, participants meet with the instructor for an initial placement exam. They are then given the following week’s assignments and a VHS or DVD copy of the weekly instruction. Students then watch the instruction when convenient at home, complete the assignments, and return the following week to turn in assignments and receive another week of materials. This program provides flexibility for those unable to make regularly scheduled classes due to irregular work schedules or family obligations.

**Health Services:**

Uninsured workers with legal US residency may be eligible for California’s Medi-Cal program or the Orange County Medical Services for Indigents (MSI) Program. Membership in either of these programs allows low-income workers to get regular medical care in many local clinics or private offices. Undocumented workers do not qualify for these services. In case of an emergency, these workers can visit any hospital
emergency room to receive care, but few options are available for non-emergency illnesses or injury.

Only two local programs were identified that would provide non-emergency services to uninsured adult men without requesting documentation of residency. The first is a County of Orange Health Care Agency clinic, in Costa Mesa. The Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health (MCAH) Program offers primarily reproductive health services for men, including birth control, prostate exams, colon cancer screening, testicle cancer screening, Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) screening and treatment, Hepatitis B shots, and health education.

The second program is the Share Our Selves (SOS) Free Clinic in Costa Mesa. This health and social service organization offers free medical and dental care for adults, an optical clinic, mental health services, a food and clothing bank, emergency cash assistance, and comprehensive case management. Patients must live in Orange County and pass a financial screening (generally less than 200% of poverty line with no other resources for care).

**Job Placement Services:**

Employment and job placement services available to local workers include one local day labor hiring center, one temporary employment agency, two general purpose employment development centers, hiring assistance provided by a local vocational school, and employment training and job placement targeted toward area youth.

The Luis M. Ochoa Job Center, in Huntington Beach, provides a safe, central location for day laborers to meet with prospective employers to arrange for temporary
Some workers interviewed said they had registered to work there after the Costa Mesa Job Center closed.

The Costa Mesa office of Labor Ready, Inc., places employees in temporary construction, manufacturing, hospitality services, landscaping, warehousing, and other similar assignments. The center requires legal right to work documentation. In the worker interviews, a few individuals noted using their services in the past.

The Santa Ana W/O/R/K (Work, Opportunity, Resources, and Knowledge) Center provides a wide range of services to job seekers, including job placement, job search assistance, industry specific job referrals and free use of phones, faxes, computers and the Internet. For most services, right to work documentation is not required. The W/O/R/K center has a satellite site at the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation office, in Santa Ana.

Coastline Regional Occupation Program (ROP) provides employment assistance to current students. Youth Employment Services (YES) of the Harbor Area provides job training and placement for local youth and young adults, ages 14-22.

**Legal/Immigration Resources:**

A variety of basic legal services available to local workers include immigration document preparation, free or low-cost legal consultations, and *matricula consular* (identification for Mexican nationals) cards. Document preparation, information and education are provided by the Catholic Charities of Orange County’s, Resettlement, Immigration and Citizenship Program, as well as the Hermandad Mexicana Nacional, in Santa Ana. Free legal consultation is available by telephone with the Legal Aid Society
of Orange County, and in person through the Public Law Center’s two local clinics. Low-cost legal consultation is available through the Hermandad Mexicana Nacional.

The Mexican Consulate in Santa Ana issues *matricula consular* cards and passports to Mexican residents living in Orange County. Immigrant worker advocacy organizations recommend local non-residents have one of these forms of official identification, in case of emergency or in case they are stopped by police. Mika CDC has recently started a campaign to assist local residents complete and file applications for this documentation.

Legal resources for worker advocacy organizations are available from the National Immigration Law Center, and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Southern California. Both websites provide bilingual literature on issues relevant to day laborer organizing campaigns, such as rights and responsibilities when stopped by the police or immigration officials.

**Vocational/Computer Resources:**

Seven local centers offer vocational skill, computer software and internet classes. Coastline ROP offers a variety of classes such as construction, office, and automotive technology, as well as computer software classes such as Microsoft Office. Registration fee is $40 per course.

The Newport Mesa and Huntington Beach Adult Schools offer free introductory computer classes, keyboarding, and Microsoft Office (Newport Mesa offers one class taught in Spanish). Both schools also offer Vocational ESL classes, which are introductory computer classes designed for students with limited English ability. These classes teach basic computer skills, while helping students improve their English literacy.
The Santa Ana College School of Continuing Education offers a wide range of free classes, including adult basic education/literacy, basic computer skills, computer applications, office employment training, and computer repair and networking. Several classes are taught in Spanish, including three held at the Santa Ana office of the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation.

Irvine Adult School offers a variety of basic internet and software courses, with fees that range from $20 to $60. The center also offers free use of computer-based GED preparation software.

Free internet access is available at any Costa Mesa branch library. Library cards require photo identification and proof of Orange County residency, such as a piece of mail.
Chapter 5
Findings and Recommendations

This analysis and the associated review of literature on day labor workers and job centers led to several findings and recommendations. Where relevant, the recommendations will confirm or amend those provided by Nguyen (2006) in the report, *Creating sustainable opportunities for day laborers: A study of five worker centers with workforce development programs*. These recommendations are not a substitute for reviewing the complete worker interviews and service inventories (Appendices E and F), as they are informative and may be a source of further insight into planning and programming for this local demographic.

1. A new Costa Mesa day labor center is essential!

The first and most fundamental finding of this assessment is that local workers have a strong desire to establish a new job center in Costa Mesa. All workers interviewed expressed interest in using such a facility. An off-street, staffed location can help alleviate most problems the workers identified.

Literature is available presenting other options for dealing with community conflict over day laborers, including organizing and educating the workers on the corner or relocating workers to an unstaffed off-street site (Toma & Ebenshade, 2001). As many worker concerns involved feelings of vulnerability on the street and police non-solicitation activities, an off-street location is best. Further, the site should be staffed with English-speaking workers.
who can ensure labor is distributed fairly and increase employer accountability for worker safety and rights.

2. **Focus on employment**

The focus of this center should be on consistently achieving the highest level of worker placement. The need for steady work and decent pay were overarching themes of the worker interviews and should be the guiding principles of the new center. Local workers said they did not use the Huntington Beach job center because it was ineffective at job placement. If CREO is to be successful, it should provide immediate economic advantages to local workers, in addition to long-term technical and life skills training.

3. **Phase in full service provision**

Building on Recommendation 2, all initiatives other than job placement (e.g., ESL, vocational classes) should be implemented only after the center has shown the community that it can successfully facilitate hiring. CREO should avoid trying to do too much, too soon, focus on hiring first, and save other services for later. In addition to not burdening CREO planners and staff, this will allow the center time to demonstrate success that will be attractive to potential partners and funding sources.

4. **Build relationships with employers**

In order to maximize hiring, the center should strive to develop a good relationship with local employers. Centers provide many advantages for
employers including, 1) an organized hiring process in which the employer can more easily find a worker with the specific skills needed; 2) greater worker accountability; 3) a more consistent labor pool on any given day; 4) a structure for registering complaints; and, 5) a greater variety of workers and skills available (Toma & Ebenshade, 2001). Employers must view CREO as an easy and efficient place to find workers who meet their needs.

Locate the new facility as close to the old corners as possible. The center should publicize employment services and flier or post signs at the old corners and nearby businesses (e.g., 7-11, Burger Hut). Center staff should provide quick and professional customer service. These relationships allow the center to maintain a steady flow of employers, and may help future development of more extensive partnerships, such as vocational apprenticeship programs.

5. **Investigate and prevent worker abuse/nonpayment**

One of the most important roles of the day labor center is to act as a deterrent to worker abuse and nonpayment. Many of the workers interviewed admitted this was a common problem they face when seeking work on the street. The center should employ English-speaking staff charged with investigating worker claims. Staff should gather as much information about potential employers as possible, including business cards and license plate numbers. In some cases, a call or letter from the center inquiring about the worker’s claim may help. In situations where it appears the employer intentionally hired the worker without intending to pay him/her, staff may wish to report the case to the police as criminal fraud. Operational protocol should also be developed for dealing with
abusive employers who return to the center. Taking these steps will enhance workers’ confidence in the center.

6. Work with police

The local police department can help or hinder the community’s efforts to manage day laborers. As recent events in Costa Mesa have shown, the local police do not support street-side acquisition of work. Additionally, many workers acknowledged the burden of street-side enforcement shouldered by the local police. For this reason, it serves everyone’s best interest to organize the workers into a center.

The center should strive to develop a good relationship with the local police department. Officers should see the center and registered workers as partners in advocating for a safe and just community. Staff should maintain regular contact with local officers to exchange information on mutual concerns and build trust between officers and workers. Officers could be asked to refer remaining workers on the streets to the center in lieu of ticketing them, increasing the center’s effectiveness.

7. Offer vocational ESL classes

Low English language literacy was understood by Costa Mesa day laborers as one of the primary barriers to employment. Regardless, the area is well-served with many opportunities for comprehensive, progressive ESL coursework for a variety of skills. For the purposes of CREO, an informal and flexible vocational ESL class such as that designed by CASA of Maryland
Worker Center (recommended in Nguyen, 2006) seems an ideal basic language class to offer. This course would teach basic on-the-job language skills, while allowing workers to come and go as they need. Newport-Mesa Adult School may also be willing to offer courses at the job center.

8. Offer vocational training

A number of workers noted that they believed training in construction-related vocational skills, such as painting, plumbing, carpentry, and blueprint reading, would help improve their ability to find and maintain sustainable employment. Orange Coast College offers a program in Construction Technology that includes many classes in these areas. Yet, workers with insufficient English language ability and foreign-citizenship are ineligible to enroll. CREO should capitalize on this significant absence and develop programming in these areas, potentially offering classes or workshops with Spanish-speaking instructors. As Nguyen (2006) recommended, partnering with local construction or landscaping firms to provide such programs could help. Companies who have hired local day laborers in the past may be willing to provide training in exchange for access to more highly skilled workers. Maintaining contact with employers from the center’s beginning, as noted in Recommendation 4, will allow CREO staff to identify opportunities for such partnerships.

The workers interviewed generally had very low levels of computer literacy. Regardless, this skill does not seem as essential to advancement as either English language or vocational training. Additionally, initiating such training programs on-site is capital intensive. In later stages of development, the center
may wish to offer computer resources and computer classes (preferably tied to English language instruction), but this should be a relatively low priority.

9. **Promote awareness of medical and worker safety education**

As workers interviewed were frequently uninformed about local medical services, a campaign for health care education should be considered as part of center programming. CREO could partner with the Share Our Selves Free Clinic or other local health care advocacy organizations (e.g., Latino Health Access or the UC Irvine club “Student Health Outreach”), to provide occupational safety awareness, nutritional education, STD prevention, and referrals to local clinics.

10. **Consider providing a certification program for different skills**

One worker recommended that the center keep track of specific worker skills to expedite hiring for employers looking to fill specialized needs, such as carpentry or masonry. CREO may wish to develop a program to issue certificates to skilled workers, and maintain a database of certified workers so that appropriate workers can be quickly matched to employers.

11. **Improve worker image in community**

The workers and the center should strive to develop and maintain a good image within the community. This is especially important in an area with such questionable political support as Costa Mesa. The center should act in a public relations role, to dispel negative stereotypes of day laborers and portray the local workers as the hard-working, tax-paying community members that they are.
Volunteer projects sponsored by the police, school district, city or community groups, such as the annual “Neighbors for Neighbors” clean-up, as well as informational tabling at local fairs and events, are ways that the center can project a positive image to the greater community. Additionally, this public presence will assist center marketing efforts by raising awareness of CREO employment services.

12. Create mandatory orientation program at entry.

CREO was intended to serve as a source of education and worker development for local day laborers. To this end, the center may wish to develop a mandatory orientation program for workers when they first register for hiring at CREO. This training could provide basic information on labor rights, health, safety, and other topics, as needed. This training may be supplemented by periodic mandatory or optional specialized workshops.

13. Promote worker participation in center planning and operations

As users of the center, local day laborers themselves are the most important source of insight into planning and operations that CREO has. This ideal was the driving force of deciding to conduct this assessment in the first place. To this end, the center should require democratic and participatory worker involvement, and workers should be encouraged to feel ownership of the project. A worker board of representatives should be established early in the planning process to advise center planning, operations, rule-making, and staff hiring.
14. Include opportunities for women

Job placement should not be restricted to male laborers seeking work in construction or manual tasks. It is important for the worker center to remain flexible in their job placement services, and provide opportunities for all community members to participate. One interview subject was a woman who had used the former Costa Mesa Job Center to arrange domestic work. CREO should promote the center for such opportunities and do whatever it can to make women feel comfortable using their services. If women are not able to wait at the center on a daily basis due to family or other responsibilities, the center could consider setting up a phone tree to inform registered women of job opportunities as they arise.

15. Organize workers

The center should be more than a place where workers come together to compete for work. Rather, it should be a place where workers consider themselves part of a community. CREO should encourage activities that enhance this process and build camaraderie among workers. Potential activities include sports teams, parties and social events, ethnic/cultural celebrations, religious meetings, Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, etc. Any worker-initiated gathering that builds trust and develops awareness of common issues and concerns within the community would work toward that end.

Mika CDC is well-suited to capitalize on this organization for the good of the greater community. The leaders that surface may be important contacts for leveraging insight and support for Mika-initiated programs and services.
Chapter 6
Figure References

Figure 1. Day laborers line the sidewalk in Carlsbad, CA. North County Times, July 4, 2006. Accessed November 28, 2006 from: http://www.nctimes.com/content/articles/2006/07/04/news/top_stories/03_71_447_3_06.jpg

Figure 2. Day laborers swarm around the pick-up truck of an employer. North County Times, August 11, 2006. Accessed November 28, 2006 from: http://www.nctimes.com/content/articles/2006/08/12/news/top_stories/20_02_498_11_06.jpg

Figure 3. Map showing the Westside of Costa Mesa, CA. Modified from the Technical Background Report, City of Costa Mesa Westside Specific Plan, 1999.

Chapter 7
References


Appendix A. Worker Interview Questions

Demographics
Please choose a false name by which I can identify you? (subject confidentiality):
Age:
City of residence:
Country of birth:
   If not “United States”, length of time living in the US:
Who do you live with? How many people live in your apartment?:
Monthly expenses (rent, auto/transit, food, etc.):
Monthly income from all sources (“average” OR “good month” and “bad month”):
Monthly amount paid in family support/remittances:
Do you have a California Driver’s license/State-issued identification card?:

Education/Basic Skills
Number of years of formal education:
Do you hold a degree?:
How well can you Speak English?: None / A little / Get by / Well
How well can you Read English?: None / A little / Get by / Well
How well can you Write English?: None / A little / Get by / Well
Are you able to use a personal computer? The internet?:
Where do you generally use a computer/internet?:
What do you know about local educational/job skill training services?:
Have you ever used any local educational/job skill training services?:

Current Work/Work History/Occupational Skills
How many days/hours a week do you work as a day laborer?:
Do you work a job other than as a day laborer? What is that job? How many hours a week do you work it?:
What do you like about your current work situation?:
What don’t you like about your current work situation?:
What kind of work do you usually do?:
What kind of work have you done in the past in the US? In home country?:
What kinds of work can you do? Tell me everything you could do if someone came to hire you right now?:
What could you not do? What do you wish you could do?:
What skills do you think would most help improve your chances of finding a better job?:
How do you usually find work?:

Work Problems
Have you ever experienced any type of abuses by your employer while working as a day laborer? (Examples: nonpayment, paid less than agreed, left at work site, violence, insulted, worked more hours than agreed, etc.):
Have you ever been injured or made ill while working as a day laborer? (defin: injuries or illnesses linked to events or exposures in the work environment that caused or contributed to the condition or aggravated a preexisting condition):
   Did you receive care for this injury/illness?:


If so, where? If not, why?:
Have you ever missed work because of this injury/illness?:

About this Work Site
On most days, how many workers come to this site?:
On most days, how many employers come to this site?:
What is the usual length of work you find (1 day, 1 week, 1 month, etc.)?:
How much do you usually earn from this work (per hour or per day)?:
How often do the police come to this site?:
Have you ever been given a ticket by the police?:
    If so, how much was the fine? Did you have to pay it?:
Do you ever look for work in other locations? If so, where?:

Worker Centers
Have you ever used a day-labor hiring center?:
    If so, where?:
    What did you think of the center?:
    What services did you use?:
    How effective do you think it was?:
Would you like to use an organized hiring center here in Costa Mesa? Why/Why not?:
What recommendations can you give to those considering opening a day labor hiring center here in Costa Mesa?:

General
What are some of the problems/difficulties you face most often?:
What are some things the community of Costa Mesa could do to help improve the lives of people like yourself?:
Appendix B. Probes and Interviewer Remarks

OPEN-ENDED PROBES:
Anything else?
Any others?
Any other reasons?

PROBES FOR VAGUE OR ONE-WORD ANSWERS:
How do you mean?
Would you tell me more about you're thinking on that?
Does a particular aspect of that problem stand out in your mind?
Could you give me more information about your thoughts on . . . ?
Thinking about ____ a bit more, what else about it concerns you?
Could you tell me a little more about that?
Would you tell me what you have in mind?
Could you elaborate on . . . ?

GENERAL REMARKS:
Let me repeat the question.
Let me repeat the choices.
Of course, no one knows for sure.
There are no right or wrong answers.
We're just interested in what you think.

STANDARD CLARIFICATIONS:
Whatever ____ means to you.
Whatever you think of as ____.
It is important that the question be answered as best you can in terms of the way it's stated. Maybe I could read it to you again.
Could I reread the question and the answer I've written down just to be sure I have everything you wanted to say?

FEEDBACK PHRASES:
It's important to find out what people think about this.
I see, that's helpful to know.
That's useful/helpful information.
Thanks, it's important to get your opinion for our research.

TASK-RELATED COMMENTS:
Let me get that down.
I want to make sure I have that right. (REPEAT ANSWER)
We have touched on this before, but I need to ask every question in the order that it appears on the questionnaire.
You've told me something about this, and the next question asks . . .

Appendix C. Study Information Sheet (English)

University of California, Irvine
Study Information Sheet

Economic and Workforce Development Needs of Costa Mesa Day Laborers

Lead Researcher
Cassandra Kifer, Master’s Student
Department: Planning, Policy & Design
Telephone number and e-mail address: (562) 607-4212, ckifer@uci.edu

Research Personnel
Xochitl Quintero
Department: Spanish
Email address: xquintero@uci.edu

Beatriz Sosa
Department: Psychology
Email address: bsosa@uci.edu

Faculty Sponsor
Mireille Jacobsen, Ph.D.
Department: Planning, Policy, & Design
Telephone number and e-mail address: (949) 824-5797, mireille@uci.edu

• You are being asked to participate in a research study about the economic and job training needs of day laborers who seek work in Costa Mesa.

• The research procedures involve an audio-taped interview that will last approximately 60 minutes at a location convenient for you.

• The only foreseeable discomfort associated with the study is the invasion of your privacy. There are no direct benefits from participation in the study. However, this study may explain services and job training opportunities that can help workers like you find better, higher paying jobs.

• Participation in this study is voluntary. There is no cost to you for participating. You may refuse to participate or discontinue your involvement at any time without penalty. You may choose to skip a question or a study procedure.

• You will receive $25 for participating in this research.

• All research data collected will be stored securely and confidentially by the Lead Researcher (Cassandra Kifer). No personally identifying information (your name, address, phone number, etc.) will be collected from you. All audio tapes will be destroyed upon transcription, no later than April 1, 2006.
• The research team, authorized UCI personnel, the study sponsor (if applicable), and regulatory entities such as the FDA, may have access to your study records to protect your safety and welfare. Any information derived from this research project that personally identifies you will not be voluntarily released or disclosed by these entities without your separate consent, except as specifically required by law.

• If you have any comments, concerns, or questions regarding the conduct of this research please contact the researchers listed at the top of this form.

• If you are unable to reach the researchers listed at the top of the form and have general questions, or you have concerns or complaints about the research, or questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact UCI’s Office of Research Administration by phone, (949) 824-6662, by e-mail at IRB@rgs.uci.edu or at University Tower - 4199 Campus Drive, Suite 300, Irvine, CA 92697-7600.
Appendix D. Study Information Sheet (Spanish)

*Universidad de California, Irvine*
*Hoja de información del estudio*

**Las necesidades económicas y el desarrollo de la mano de obra de los jornaleros de Costa Mesa**

**Investigadora principal**
Cassandra Kifer, Estudiante de maestría  
Departamento: Planificación, político y diseño urbano  
Numero de teléfono y dirección de correo electrónico: (562) 607-4212, ckifer@uci.edu

**Asistente investigadoras**
Xochitl Quintero  
Departamento: Español  
Dirección de correo electrónico: xquintero@uci.edu

Beatriz Sosa  
Departamento: Psicología  
Dirección de correo electrónico: bsosa@uci.edu

**Patrocinado profesorado**
Mireille Jacobsen, Ph.D.  
Departamento: Planificación, político y diseño urbano  
Numero de teléfono y dirección de correo electrónico: (949) 824-5797, mireille@uci.edu

- Pedimos su ayuda para participar en una investigación acerca de las necesidades económicas y entrenamientos de trabajo de los jornaleros que buscan trabajo en Costa Mesa.
- Los procedimientos de investigación requiere de una entrevista grabada con una duración de aproximadamente sesenta minutos en una lugar conveniente para usted.
- La única molestia previsible asociada con el estudio es la invasión de su privacidad. No hay beneficios directos por participar en este estudio. Sin embargo, este estudio podría explicar servicios y entrenamientos de trabajo que podrían ayudar a los obreros como usted encontrar trabajos que paguen más dinero y que sean más convenientes.
- Su participación en este estudio es voluntario. No hay un costo por su participación. Usted puede no participar en este estudio o descontinuar su participación cualquier momento sin alguna sanción. Usted puede no contestar alguna pregunta o algún procedimiento si así lo desea.
- Usted va a recibir $25 por su participación en esta investigación.
- Todos los datos colectivos de esta investigación estarán guardados en un lugar seguro y confidencial por la investigadora principal (Cassandra Kifer). Ninguna
información personal (como su nombre, dirección, número de teléfono, etcétera) va a ser requerida. Todas las grabaciones serán destruidos después de haber sido transcritas hasta el 1 de abril, 2007.

- El equipo de investigación, el personal autorizado de UCI, el patrocinador del estudio (si se aplica) y entidades regulatorias como el FDA pueden obtener acceso a sus resultados del estudio para proteger su seguridad y bienestar. Alguna información derivada de este proyecto de investigación que identifica su identidad personal, no será liberada por parte de estas entidades sin antes obtener su consentimiento, con excepción de los requisitos de la ley.

- Si usted tiene alguna inquietud o preguntas con respecto al estudio de investigación, debería ponerse en contacto con el equipo a cargo de la misma, cuyos miembros se detallan en la parte superior del formulario de consentimiento.

- Si usted no está en condiciones de ponerse en contacto con un miembro del equipo a cargo de la investigación y desea realizar preguntas generales, o tiene inquietudes o quejas acerca del estudio de investigación, del equipo a cargo de la misma, o preguntas acerca de sus derechos como sujeto de investigación, por favor póngase en contacto con el Programa de Protecciones a la Investigación de la UCI en la Oficina de Administración de la Investigación, llamando al teléfono (949) 824-6068 o al (949) 824-2125 de lunes a viernes, de 8 a.m. a 5 p.m.; o por e-mail a IRB@rgs.uci.edu; o bien escribiéndonos a University Tower - 4199 Campus Drive, Suite 300, Irvine, CA 92697-7600.
Appendix E. Worker Interview Transcripts

- **Interviews 1-7**
  Wednesday, February 14. Location: Placentia Avenue and Victoria Street.

- **Interviews 8-13**
  Saturday, February 17. Location: Placentia Avenue and 17th Street.

- **Interviews 14-15**
  Sunday, February 18. Workers referred by Mika CDC.
INTERVIEW DATE: 2/14/07
START TIME: 7:10 AM
END TIME: 7:30 AM
WORKER INTERVIEW #1

Demographics

Name: Jorge
Age: 30 years-old
City of residence: Costa Mesa
Country of birth: Mexico
Length of time living in the US: 5 years
Who do you live with?: With family

Monthly expenses (rent, auto/transit, food, etc.): $600/month

Monthly income from all sources: Depends on the amount of work I get.

Monthly amount paid in family support/remittances: $1,000/month

Education/Basic Skills

Number of years of formal education: Up to 12th grade.

Do you hold a degree?: Public accountant.

How well can you Speak/Read/Write English?: Speak: a little; Read: not at all; Write: not at all.

Are you able to use a personal computer? The internet?: Yes, I can use a computer and the internet.

Where do you generally use a computer/internet?: I use it at an internet café in Costa Mesa.

What do you know about local educational/job skill training services?: No, I don’t know of anything.

Have you ever used any local educational/job skill training services?: No.

Current Work/Work History/Occupational Skills

How many days/hours a week do you work as a day laborer?: I work about 40 hours/week.

Do you work a job other than as a day laborer?: No.
What do you like about your current work situation?: I like almost everything about my job.

What don’t you like about your current work situation?: I don’t have a steady job as a painter.

What kind of work do you usually do?: I usually paint.

What kind of work have you done in the past in the US? In home country?: I’ve worked in factories in both the US and Mexico.

What kinds of work can you do? Tell me everything you could do right now if someone came to hire you?: I can do whatever kind of job is needed. Anything really, there’s nothing I can’t learn.

What could you not do? What do you wish you could do?: There’s nothing that I wouldn’t be able to learn. I wish I had a steady job.

What skills do you think would most help improve your chances of finding a better job?: I think that it would be good to learn more things about painting.

How do you usually find work?: On the corner.

Work Problems

Have you ever experienced any type of abuses by your employer while working as a day laborer? (Examples: Nonpayment, paid less than agreed, left at work site, violence, insulted, worked more hours than agreed, etc.): No, I have never been mistreated on the job.

Have you ever been injured or made ill while working as a day laborer? (Def.: Injuries or illnesses linked to events or exposures in the work environment that caused or contributed to the condition or aggravated a preexisting condition): No, I have never been injured.

Worker Centers

Have you ever used a day-labor hiring center?: What did you think of the center? What services did you use? How effective do you think it was?: No, n/a.

Would you like to use an organized hiring center here in Costa Mesa? Why/Why not?: Yes, at least we could find jobs a lot easier.

What recommendations can you give to those considering opening a day labor hiring center here in Costa Mesa?: I would say they could open a job center to help us advance and not just put us on the side [not to disregard the workers]. We know that in life, if you don’t have a job, you don’t have anything.

General

What are some of the problems/difficulties you face most often?: It’s hard to find work.
What are some things the community of Costa Mesa could do to help improve the lives of people like yourself?: That there not be so much racism [towards the workers]. Like for example, they might say, “Oh, they’re Latinos, I don’t want to hire them.”
INTERVIEW DATE: 2/14/07
START TIME: 7:25 AM
END TIME: 7:50 AM
WORKER INTERVIEW #2

Demographics

Name: Javier
Age: 30 years-old
City of residence: Costa Mesa
Country of birth: Mexico
Length of time living in the US: 10 years
Who do you live with?: Lives with several family members; cousins, brothers, etc.
Monthly expenses (rent, auto/transit, food, etc.): $300/month for rent, $30/month for transportation, $40/month for food.
Monthly income from all sources: $1,200 is an okay month.
Monthly amount paid in family support/remittances: I send about $150 to my children.

Education/Basic Skills

Number of years of formal education: Up to the 3rd grade.
Do you hold a degree?: No.
How well can you Speak/Read/Write English?: Speak: a little, Read and Write: not at all.
Are you able to use a personal computer? The internet?: No; no.
Where do you generally use a computer/internet?: Doesn’t know of anything
What do you know about local educational/job skill training services?: Doesn’t know of anything
Have you ever used any local educational/job skill training services?: No

Current Work/Work History/Occupational Skills

How many days/hours a week do you work as a day laborer?: 3-4 days/week
Do you work a job other than as a day laborer?: No
What do you like about your current work situation?: [unclear]…I like to do carpentry work.
What don’t you like about your current work situation?: [unclear]

What kind of work do you usually do?: Construction

What kind of work have you done in the past in the US? In home country?: No answer

What kinds of work can you do? Tell me everything you could do right now if someone came to hire you?: No answer

What could you not do? What do you wish you could do?: No answer

What skills do you think would most help improve your chances of finding a better job?: Learn English

How do you usually find work?: Well, I have to look for jobs here [on corner by 7-11]. We get jobs when we are waiting here and someone arrives and asks us if we want to work. Sometimes the jobs are close by and sometimes they are far away—it depends. Yes, sometimes the employers will give us food; it just depends on the employer. If there was a job center, it would be easier to find a job. But it’s very hard to find one now.

Work Problems

Have you ever experienced any type of abuses by your employer while working as a day laborer? (Examples: Nonpayment, paid less than agreed, left at work site, violence, insulted, worked more hours than agreed, etc.): Yes, I have had people tell me they would pay me a certain amount of money per hour and then they end up paying me less.

Have you ever been injured or made ill while working as a day laborer? (Def.: Injuries or illnesses linked to events or exposures in the work environment that caused or contributed to the condition or aggravated a preexisting condition): No, I haven’t gotten sick because of my job.

Have you ever missed work because of this injury/illness?: Yes, I have missed work because I have been sick [non-work related illness].

Worker Centers

Have you ever used a day-labor hiring center?: Yes, I used to use the one [here, Costa Mesa], but they closed it already.

What did you think of the center?: I thought it was very good and everyone used it.

What services did you use?: [unclear]

How effective do you think it was?: Yes.

Would you like to use an organized hiring center here in Costa Mesa? Why/Why not?: Yes, I think it would be a good idea to have one so we don’t have to look in the street. It would be a good idea for everyone.
What recommendations can you give to those considering opening a day labor hiring center here in Costa Mesa?: What I would like to suggest is that it would be a good idea. It’s what everyone would want to have. We have problems with the police that come here all the time.

General

What are some of the problems/difficulties you face most often?: Well, we have problems when we are waiting on the corner from people like the police bothering us and telling us that we shouldn’t be here. Yes, they know we are here looking for work.

What are some things the community of Costa Mesa could do to help improve the lives of people like yourself?: Put in a job center so we don’t have to be on the corners.
INTERVIEW DATE: 2/14/07
START TIME: 7:40 AM
END TIME: 8:00 AM
WORKER INTERVIEW #3

Demographics

Name: Jose
Age: 44 years-old
City of residence: Costa Mesa
Country of birth: Mexico
Length of time living in the US: 23 years
Who do you live with?: He lives with family—cousins also.
Monthly expenses (rent, auto/transit, food, etc.): $650+
Monthly income from all sources: Doesn’t have work for 2-3 months. Especially in rainy seasons. A good or bad month depends if I have work or not.
Monthly amount paid in family support/remittances: Depends on income

Education/Basic Skills

Number of years of formal education: 13 years
Do you hold a degree?: No, I only have a high school diploma.
How well can you Speak/Read/Write English?: Speak: well; Read: well; Write: well
Are you able to use a personal computer? The internet?: No, I only play games really.
Where do you generally use a computer/internet?: At home.
What do you know about local educational/job skill training services?: Before at the job center, there were English classes.
Have you ever used any local educational/job skill training services?: No, I learned everything on the job.

Current Work/Work History/Occupational Skills

How many days/hours a week do you work as a day laborer?: It depends on the type of jobs that are available. Sometimes I’ll work 8 hours/day.
Do you work a job other than as a day laborer? No, not right now.
What do you like about your current work situation?: I like knowing different types of people like American, Japanese. I like learning about what other people do.

What don’t you like about your current work situation?: [I don’t like] that the job center closed. I used it for ten years. I still have the cards, but that’s all I have left: memories.

What kind of work do you usually do?: I usually paint or do gardening.

What kind of work have you done in the past in the US? In home country?: In the US I was a cook before. And in Mexico I was a taxi driver.

What kinds of work can you do? Tell me everything you could do right now if someone came to hire you?: It depends on what people want me to do. I can paint, do carpentry work.

What could you not do? What do you wish you could do?: I can do all the things I just mentioned, all I need is a job. I wish I knew how to read [construction] plans and how to paint better.

What skills do you think would most help improve your chances of finding a better job?: Everything that someone would need in order to get a job. In general, one needs to know how to do everything like paint, etc.

How do you usually find work?: I find work on the corner.

Work Problems

Have you ever experienced any type of abuses by your employer while working as a day laborer? (Examples: Nonpayment, paid less than agreed, left at work site, violence, insulted, worked more hours than agreed, etc.): Yes, one time I didn’t get paid for an entire month.

Have you ever been injured or made ill while working as a day laborer? (Def.: Injuries or illnesses linked to events or exposures in the work environment that caused or contributed to the condition or aggravated a preexisting condition): I’ve had small accidents, like cutting myself with scissors, but nothing major.

Did you receive care for this injury/illness?: No, I don’t receive care for illnesses. I have to pay for my own medication [when I get ill]. Doctors are completely out of the question.

Have you ever missed work because of this injury/illness?: No, I have never had any accidents or missed work because of one.

Worker Centers

Have you ever used a day-labor hiring center?: Yes, I used the Costa Mesa job center for 10 years.

What did you think of the center?: I thought it was magnificent! It was so well organized and everyone was able to find work all the time.
What services did you use?: No, I didn’t really use services there. It offered protection from employers in case they didn’t pay you. They would look for people that didn’t pay you.

How effective do you think it was?: Yes, it was much better than waiting in the corners.

Would you like to use an organized hiring center here in Costa Mesa? Why/Why not?: Yes, they should open another office [job center] so we don’t have to find work in the streets. That’s what everyone needs.

What recommendations can you give to those considering opening a day labor hiring center here in Costa Mesa?: It [the job center] should be organized. It should be like the one that was here before. Before the job center was perfect and very well-organized.

General

What are some of the problems/difficulties you face most often?: There’s no work a lot of the times. Sometimes there’s no money to pay for the rent or food. There isn’t an office where you can go to get help.

What are some things the community of Costa Mesa could do to help improve the lives of people like yourself?: There should be another job center, and an office. That’s all. It would be a good idea for the city and for the workers. If they would put a job center here again, then the streets wouldn’t be full of people trying to look for work. The police could have something better to do besides chase after us [workers]. Sometimes the employers don’t want to hire us because they see the police watching us.
INTERVIEW DATE: 2/14/07
START TIME: 7:50 AM
END TIME: N/A
WORKER INTERVIEW #4

Demographics

Name: Ramon
Age: 28 years-old
City of residence: Costa Mesa
Country of birth: Mexico
Length of time living in the US: 2 years
Who do you live with?: No answer.
Monthly expenses (rent, auto/transit, food, etc.): [unclear]
Monthly income from all sources: [unclear]
Monthly amount paid in family support/remittances: It depends.

Education/Basic Skills

Number of years of formal education: Elementary school.
Do you hold a degree?: No.
How well can you Speak/Read/Write English?: Speak: a little; Read and Write: not at all.
Are you able to use a personal computer? The internet?: No; no.
Where do you generally use a computer/internet?: N/a.
What do you know about local educational/job skill training services?: No.
Have you ever used any local educational/job skill training services?: Yes, I used to use the one they had here before [in Costa Mesa], but they closed it down.

Current Work/Work History/Occupational Skills

How many days/hours a week do you work as a day laborer?: 12 hours/day; [no answer for how many days].
Do you work a job other than as a day laborer? No.
What do you like about your current work situation?: No, everything’s okay.
What don’t you like about your current work situation?: Well, there’s not a lot of work.
What kind of work do you usually do?: I paint.

What kind of work have you done in the past in the US? In home country?: I have done painting here in the US, in Mexico I did carpentry work, and also worked as a day-laborer, and on farms.

What kinds of work can you do? Tell me everything you could do right now if someone came to hire you?: Painting; it would depend on what they needed.

What could you not do? What do you wish you could do?: No, right now not that I can think of; no, I can do lots of things, and if you don’t know how...[unclear].

What skills do you think would most help improve your chances of finding a better job?: You just need to know a little of what they want for the job and you can learn [the rest].

How do you usually find work?: Here in the corners.

Work Problems

Have you ever experienced any type of abuses by your employer while working as a day laborer? (Examples: Nonpayment, paid less than agreed, left at work site, violence, insulted, worked more hours than agreed, etc.): No, just this one time where these Americans that were working on the job started saying that we [Latino workers] should go back to our country...[unclear].

Have you ever been injured or made ill while working as a day laborer? (Def.: Injuries or illnesses linked to events or exposures in the work environment that caused or contributed to the condition or aggravated a preexisting condition): No.

Worker Centers

Have you ever used a day-labor hiring center?: Yes, in Costa Mesa.

What did you think of the center?: I thought it had everything in order, very regulated. The employers would come there to find workers and...[unclear]. Also, when the employers treated us badly or didn’t pay us, they went to talk to them.

What services did you use?: No.

How effective do you think it was?: N/a.

Would you like to use an organized hiring center here in Costa Mesa? Why/Why not?: Yes; [no answer as to why].

General

What are some of the problems/difficulties you face most often?: No, there isn’t anything that I have had problems with. Well, sometimes there are times where the employer is looking for a worker that maybe knows more English or has their own car, but I don’t have a driver’s license.
What are some things the community of Costa Mesa could do to help improve the lives of people like yourself? No, I really don't know, I'm just trying to survive.
INTERVIEW DATE: 2/14/07
START TIME: 8:05 AM
END TIME: 8:25 AM
WOKER INTEVIEW #5

Demographics

Name: Juan
Age: 26 years-old
City of residence: Costa Mesa
Country of birth: Mexico
Length of time living in the US: 1½ years
Who do you live with? Lives with friends
Monthly expenses (rent, auto/transit, food, etc.): $1,500
Monthly income from all sources: $1,500 is a good month.
Monthly amount paid in family support/remittances: No answer.

Education/Basic Skills

Number of years of formal education: I finished elementary school.
Do you hold a degree?: No.
How well can you Speak/Read/Write English?: Speak: not at all, Read: not at all, Write: not at all.
Are you able to use a personal computer? The internet?: No; no.
Where do you generally use a computer/internet?: N/a.
What do you know about local educational/job skill training services?: Right now we don’t have anything. But before we had the one here in Costa Mesa that closed.
Have you ever used any local educational/job skill training services?: There wasn’t that many services, just a place where we could find jobs.

Current Work/Work History/Occupational Skills

How many days/hours a week do you work as a day laborer?: In a good week, I’ll work about 3-4 days, but in a bad week only about 1-2 days a week.
Do you work a job other than as a day laborer?: No.
What do you like about your current work situation?: Well, I like doing carpentry work a lot.

What don’t you like about your current work situation?: I don’t like…well, sometimes I don’t like how the employers treat people. They don’t know how to give directions because they only speak English. Sometimes they [bosses] will keep us there at a job really late. Sometimes when it’s more than 12 hours, it can get to you.

What kind of work do you usually do?: I do carpentry work usually.

What kind of work have you done in the past in the US? In home country?: I helped do painting work and plumbing also. Also…[unclear]. In Mexico, I worked on the farms, in factories.

What kinds of work can you do? Tell me everything you could do right now if someone came to hire you?: I can do carpentry work, things that aren’t too big of jobs, like painting. Carpentry mostly.

What could you not do? What do you wish you could do?: I can’t do stuff like electrical work. I wish I could do more stuff with painting.

What skills do you think would most help improve your chances of finding a better job?: I would like to know more things about construction. Also, to learn more English.

How do you usually find work?: I find jobs from friends, or here on the corner [on the corner by 7-11].

Work Problems

Have you ever experienced any type of abuses by your employer while working as a day laborer? (Examples: Nonpayment, paid less than agreed, left at work site, violence, insulted, worked more hours than agreed, etc.): No, up until now, I haven’t had anything bad happen to me.

Have you ever been injured or made ill while working as a day laborer? (Def.: Injuries or illnesses linked to events or exposures in the work environment that caused or contributed to the condition or aggravated a preexisting condition): No.

Did you receive care for this injury/illness?: No. And I don’t know where to get any healthcare.

Worker Centers

Have you ever used a day-labor hiring center?: We used to use one, but it’s not there anymore. Before we had one, but it closed. No, I didn’t ever use it.

Would you like to use an organized hiring center here in Costa Mesa? Why/Why not?: Yes, I would like to use a job center. There are a lot of people who could use it, there are many people who don’t have a job right now.
What recommendations can you give to those considering opening a day labor hiring center here in Costa Mesa?: They could help us find more jobs. They could help us workers more to get work on a regular basis.

General

What are some of the problems/difficulties you face most often?: One of the problems I have most of the time is not knowing English. Sometimes it’s hard to understand what is going on…[unclear]. Also, it’s a problem not to have a car or transportation.

What are some things the community of Costa Mesa could do to help improve the lives of people like yourself?: They could open a job center that could help us get into one place to look for work instead of having to look in the street.
INTERVIEW DATE: 2/14/2007
START TIME: 8:15 AM
END TIME: 8:40 AM
WORKER INTERVIEW #6

Demographics

Name: José.

Age: 52 years-old

City of residence: Garden Grove.

Country of birth: Mexico

Length of time living in the US: 20 years.

Who do you live with?: He lives with his children.

Monthly expenses (rent, auto/transit, food, etc.): Rent $1,000, food $200.

Monthly income from all sources: $350 per week, more or less $1,300 a month.

Monthly amount paid in family support/remittances: I send money when I can, maybe $100 or $200.

Education/Basic Skills

Number of years of formal education: 6th grade.

Do you hold a degree?: No.

How well can you Speak/Read/Write English?: Speak: a little; Read and Write: not at all.

Are you able to use a personal computer? The internet?: No, I can’t use a computer or the internet.

Where do you generally use a computer/internet?: No, I don’t have time to use the computer.

What do you know about local educational/job skill training services?: There was one on 17th Street, but they closed it down, and it’s been hard to open up a new one. There would be about 100 workers that would come by in the morning to the job center, but only about 20 would find jobs. The job center would close at 11 a.m. and after that, the workers that weren’t able to find a job had to look for work outside of the “protected zone” of the job center.

Have you ever used any local educational/job skill training services?: Yes, I have used a job center before, but the work is not for sure, and it depends on the type of person that is needed. It also depends on if the employer likes the work that you do, and if they do, they’ll hire you again for several days or months. If they don’t like the work you do, you have to look for work day after day. Every day you have to look and see what the job center can offer you.
Current Work/Work History/Occupational Skills

How many days/hours a week do you work as a day laborer?: I work about 40 hours per week, although it is difficult to generalize, it really depends on the person they need to hire. Some of my friends come here to work for a day of a week, or sometimes for a couple of hours during the day.

Do you work a job other than as a day laborer?: No.

What do you like about your current work situation?: No answer.

What don’t you like about your current work situation?: I don’t like people who say we are bothering them. Also people who call the police to come. They don’t let us find work in peace, they ask us to leave. I want a steady job. Not one that is only one or two days, or that depends on other factors [weather].

What kind of work do you usually do?: I can do anything that they want me to. I have to do a job, even if I haven’t had much experience or know how before, well, what can I do?

What kind of work have you done in the past in the US? In home country?: In México I was a day-laborer and in the US I have done a lot of things, including gardening.

What kinds of work can you do? Tell me everything you could do right now if someone came to hire you?: People who are looking for a certain type of worker ask us if we can do something, and well, we just say that we can do it. These few words can get you a job.

What could you not do? What do you wish you could do?: I would like to work for the government, but there are lots of things that are required for a job like that. I would like to have a good-paying job.

What skills do you think would most help improve your chances of finding a better job?: No answer.

How do you usually find work?: No answer.

Work Problems

Have you ever experienced any type of abuses by your employer while working as a day laborer? (Examples: Nonpayment, paid less than agreed, left at work site, violence, insulted, worked more hours than agreed, etc.): I have not had any problems yet. When it’s not convenient for me to have a certain job, or they don’t like the kind of work that I do, I don’t take the job. I don’t like that type of employers [who abuse workers].

Have you ever been injured or made ill while working as a day laborer? (Def.: Injuries or illnesses linked to events or exposures in the work environment that caused or contributed to the condition or aggravated a preexisting condition): I’ve only had very minor accidents, nothing serious. It’s rare that I have missed work because of being sick. Only about once or twice has this happened [missed work because of illness].

Worker Centers
Have you ever used a day-labor hiring center?: I used the job center on 17th Street (Costa Mesa).

What did you think of the center?: I would say that the job center is necessary so the workers don’t have to hide from anyone and so that nobody bothers them.

What services did you use?: None.

How effective do you think it was?: No answer.

Would you like to use an organized hiring center here in Costa Mesa? Why/Why not?: Yes, I would like to have a job center, so that we don’t have to look in corner after corner for jobs. Also, so that we can get paid decently for our work.

What recommendations can you give to those considering opening a day labor hiring center here in Costa Mesa?: I would recommend to people that they should open a job center, it's a good idea.

General

What are some of the problems/difficulties you face most often?: No, I don't have any serious problems.

What are some things the community of Costa Mesa could do to help improve the lives of people like yourself?: Job centers or programs that would allow better communication amongst the community. I don’t know if these kinds of programs already exist.
INTERVIEW DATE: 2/14/07
START TIME: 8:30 AM
END TIME: 8:47 AM
WORKER INTERVIEW #7

Demographics

Name: Rubén
Age: 33 years-old
City of residence: Costa Mesa
Country of birth: Mexico
Length of time living in the US: 8 years.

Monthly expenses (rent, auto/transit, food, etc.): $570
Monthly income from all sources: No answer.
Monthly amount paid in family support/remittances: $150/week

Education/Basic Skills

Number of years of formal education: Finished high school.
Do you hold a degree?: No.

How well can you Speak/Read/Write English?: Speak: not at all, Read: not at all, Write: a little.

Are you able to use a personal computer? The internet?: No; no.

Where do you generally use a computer/internet?: N/a.

What do you know about local educational/job skill training services?: [unclear]...I know that they are helpful in finding a job. I know of the job center on 20th and Placentia.

Have you ever used any local educational/job skill training services?: No, right now I don’t know of anything. No, [I don’t know where to go if I got sick]. No, [I haven’t been ill recently].

Current Work/Work History/Occupational Skills

How many days/hours a week do you work as a day laborer?: Well, sometimes I work about 11 hours a day. Yes, 3 days out of the week.

Do you work a job other than as a day laborer?: No.
What do you like about your current work situation?: I don’t know. I like to work in construction and gardening.

What don’t you like about your current work situation?: Nothing, everything is good.

What kind of work do you usually do?: I do gardening, landscaping, or I work as a dishwasher.

What kind of work have you done in the past in the US? In home country?: I worked in a restaurant washing dishes. In Mexico, I worked on a farm doing agricultural work.

What kinds of work can you do? Tell me everything you could do right now if someone came to hire you?: I can do construction, I can work with wood, like carpentry. I can work in construction as a helper.

What could you not do? What do you wish you could do?: [unclear] Stuff they do here in construction, like putting down floors. I can’t do that. Well, right now I’m waiting to get trained how to wash windows. To work in a restaurant as a prep cook.

What skills do you think would most help improve your chances of finding a better job?: No answer.

How do you usually find work?: Through an application…[unclear] or from friends.

Work Problems

Have you ever experienced any type of abuses by your employer while working as a day laborer? (Examples: Nonpayment, paid less than agreed, left at work site, violence, insulted, worked more hours than agreed, etc.): No.

Have you ever been injured or made ill while working as a day laborer? (Def.: Injuries or illnesses linked to events or exposures in the work environment that caused or contributed to the condition or aggravated a preexisting condition): No.

Worker Centers

Have you ever used a day-labor hiring center?: In the past, I used a job center in Los Angeles. In the city of Santa Monica.

What did you think of the center? I thought it was a good thing to have.

What services did you use? They would give us food. [unclear].

How effective do you think it was?: Yes.

Would you like to use an organized hiring center here in Costa Mesa? Why/Why not?: Yes, I would because it would help us look for jobs. It’s very difficult for us to find jobs now.

What recommendations can you give to those considering opening a day labor hiring center here in Costa Mesa?: I would want them to know that we need one, because we are looking for work.
**General**

**What are some of the problems/difficulties you face most often?:** Well, the police come here a lot and they give us tickets.

**What are some things the community of Costa Mesa could do to help improve the lives of people like yourself?:** The best thing to do would be is open a job center so we don’t have any problems with the police and it would be a place that we could go and find jobs. No, I don’t want to add anything else besides that we want a job center and that it would help us not to have problems with the police, that’s all that we ask.
INTERVIEW DATE: 2/17/07
START TIME: 8:15 AM
END TIME: 9:00 AM
INTERVIEW #8

Demographics

Name: Juan Perez
Age: 35
City of residence: Garden Grove
Country of birth: Mexico
Length of time living in the US: 12 years

Who do you live with? How many people live in your apartment?: I live with my daughter, my son, and his wife. That makes four of us.

Monthly expenses (rent, auto/transit, food, etc.): $1,500 dollars.

Monthly income from all sources: $2,000 or $1,500 dollars is a good month.

Monthly amount paid in family support/remittances: No, my family is all here.

Do you have a California Driver’s license/ID?: No. I have a license from the Mexican Consulate.

Education/Basic Skills

Number of years of formal education: In Mexico, I only finished what would be considered here in the United States, high school.

How well can you Speak/Read/Write English?: I speak a little English. I understand a lot of it. Right now, I’m taking English classes at an adult school to learn more English so I can use it more. [My English] is average. Reading is the same. My writing is the same too.

Are you able to use a personal computer? The internet?: I’m learning to [use the computer], at the school where I’m learning English they’re teaching us. I’m learning to use the internet too. In the school they are teaching us how to use programs and how to use the internet.

Where do you generally use a computer/internet?: At the school. My daughter has one at home but I don’t use it. Yes, I use the computer at the school I go to.

What do you know about local educational/job skill training services?: Well, I know that there are agencies where you can look for work. There are agencies and there are clinics. Yes, the clinics are local.

Have you ever used any local educational/job skill training services?: Yes. Well, I have used services to find work, for example and medical services too. Yes, that’s it.
Current Work/Work History/Occupational Skills

How many days/hours a week do you work as a day laborer?: 40 hours. [I work] Monday through Friday.

Do you work a job other than as a day laborer? What is that job? How many hours a week do you work it?: No, I just work as a day-laborer. Well, sometimes…no just this.

What do you like about your current work situation?: What do I like? That I work the kind of job I want to work and working directly with a boss, a small company, and well, that they pay okay.

What don’t you like about your current work situation?: What don’t I like? Well, we could say that sometimes…well, the jobs are in different cities and they are far, and sometimes you have to bring your own tools, there isn’t a possibility of this. But everything else is good.

What kind of work do you usually do?: I do construction.

What kind of work have you done in the past in the US? In home country?: In the past, well, I have done gardening, painting, worked as a dishwasher in a restaurant. I’ve also done construction, like dry walling and working with concrete. In Mexico, I worked in a hotel as a receptionist, and also I worked in a company that made products like Coca-Cola, yes, like a factory.

What kinds of work can you do? Tell me everything you could do right now if someone came to hire you?: Well, I can do everything like construction, painting. What can I do? Well, I speak a little English, and that I can do different [kinds] of construction, I know how to put up dry wall, to paint, I know something about gardening, and well, a lot of things about construction, demolition, landscaping, all that deals with construction I know how to do without any problem.

What could you not do? What do you wish you could do?: Well, for example, to work in retail, things like that. I can’t do plumbing either, or electrical [work].

What skills do you think would most help improve your chances of finding a better job?: Well, to learn how to use the computer, learn how to read and write more English, and well, to have my own business. To work to pay my bills. To prepare myself more to learn something more specific, to be a professional, like carpentry would be something. To learn a specialty in something.

How do you usually find work?: Well, I find jobs from people I have already worked for. And through the newspaper or [unclear]. Or people that have given recommendations that you know how to do something. I only look for work here [on the corner by 7-11] when I can’t find another job. Only sometimes.

Work Problems

Have you ever experienced any type of abuses by your employer while working as a day laborer? (Examples: Nonpayment, paid less than agreed, left at work site, violence, insulted, worked more hours than agreed, etc.): No, until now, no. Thank God everything
has gone well. Normally, if you don’t do something bad, something that they tell you not to do, they treat you well. Have I not gotten paid? No, this hasn’t happened.

**Have you ever been injured or made ill while working as a day laborer?** (Def.: Injuries or illnesses linked to events or exposures in the work environment that caused or contributed to the condition or aggravated a preexisting condition):
Yes, on one occasion, I was cutting dry wall and I cut my finger. Here, you can see the scar. But the boss had insurance and covered all the costs at the Red Cross in Newport Beach. Then there wasn’t a problem. I cut my finger and that’s all. No, it wasn’t serious.

**Did you receive care for this injury/illness?:** The first time I was treated at the Red Cross in Newport Beach. And the insurance company the boss had sent a list of doctors where I could get additional therapies, but I never went because I was fine and recuperated.

**Have you ever missed work because of this injury/illness?:** When I had a big accident, I missed a week of work. The second time, it was half a week. No, it was only one time that it happened. No, I didn’t have any problems with my boss.

**About This Work Site**

**On most days, how many workers come to this site?:** Here on the corner? Like 30 or 40 people.

**On most days, how many employers come to this site?:** Right now, a little bit, 5-10 more or less. They are a little slow.

**What is the usual length of work you find (1 day, 1 week, 1 month, etc.)?:** It depends. Sometimes you’ll get hired for a week, for an hour or two. Or for a month or two months. It depends on what you know how to do and what the employer wants. If he needs your services, he’ll employ you [to work] more, also it depends on if the employer likes the way you work.

**How much do you usually earn from this work (per hour or per day)?:** Usually, you get paid by the day. The usual is, well, the contract is verbal, there isn’t a real contract or application you fill out, it’s just an agreement. If they trust you and say hire you for a month, they’ll pay you every week. But, when they don’t know you, it’s every day. And later, if there’s an agreement, they’ll pay every week. Usually it’s every week. Well, it [the pay rate] depends, like I told you. We’re day-laborers and the majority of us sometimes do specialized jobs and it [the pay rate] usually starts at $10-12 dollars per hour. It depends on what you know how to do. And if you have a specialty that you know how to do or an ability to do something, it’s negotiable for what they have to pay you, right? If you have your own “heremienta”, or your own car, or you know English or understand orders of what they want you to do. Then they have to pay you a little more.

**How often do the police come to this site?:** Yes, sometimes the police come. They want to tell us that we can’t stay here. Sometimes they pass and they only look at us waiting for work. But if we’re not doing anything bad, but there are people who like messing around or drinking. If they don’t see anything, they don’t do anything. There are some [police] that tell us that we can’t be on private property. They tell us that we shouldn’t be in the sidewalk or the street. They just want to check the areas we are in are clean. There are sometimes that they tell us that we shouldn’t be here. That it’s illegal to look for work in the street. And they explain to us that it’s their job to do so and they leave and if they come back, they give you another warning in a different way.
Have you ever been given a ticket by the police?: I have gotten warnings, but I haven’t gotten a ticket. Well, when a police officer comes, they warn me and we are gone. We get warnings.

Do you ever look for work in other locations? If so, where?: Yes, I’ve looked for work in other places like Huntington Beach for work, in Laguna Niguel there is another place to wait for work, the Home Depot on McArthur sometimes.

Worker Centers

Have you ever used a day-labor hiring center?: Yes this one [job center] that was open in 2005, there is another that is on Hammington and Harbor that is called Labor Ready in Costa Mesa.

What did you think of the center?: I thought it was a great help, if someone is hanging around the street looking for work it’s easier to identify work. If you ask me, why is the job center a good idea, I would say that it has a relationship with an employer and it gets rid of those problems.

What services did you use?: Yes, English classes, classes to train you a specific job like dry wall, tile, or things like that. There are companies that promote their products and offer free classes to use their products too.

How effective do you think it was?: Yes, they’re good [places]. It’s a good idea because it helps you find a job if you don’t have one, or if you're working at a job that pays little, they can help you find a better job to help you out.

Would you like to use an organized hiring center here in Costa Mesa? Why/Why not?: Yes, I would like them to have a job center like the one that was here before. It’s helpful for the community if anything. Like the people who are unemployed, it gives them a way to make a living, something for their family.

What recommendations can you give to those considering opening a day labor hiring center here in Costa Mesa?: Well, it’s good because it helps people who are unemployed and in the street looking for work. It’s a necessity more than anything. If someone doesn’t have work, then it’s a help for these kinds of people. It’s a way to help people [who don’t have jobs] and it’s a way for employers to find people to work for them, it’s a way for employers to not have to look in the street for employees, a way to make it more formal to contract a person to work and to have more confidence in the person [employee]. I think it’s good. It’s a lot of help for the employer and employee and for the community also because it gets rid of possible delinquency, or something “para enfotarles”. Suggestions? Yes, I would like that the job centers help people who don’t know this country’s language, English classes, classes to learn a skill like carpentry, plumbing, electrical, things that someone would need. I would suggest that it be a comfortable place. More than anything, that there’s not a lot of tensions between people, that there is a stronger sense of community. That would be the main suggestion. These are just my personal suggestions. More services? Well, for example that they give help to people that have problems like domestic violence or alcohol. It would depend on the person. Help with medical [care] also. That would be good for people who are sick and don’t know it. Also, help with venereal diseases would be good.

General
What are some of the problems/difficulties you face most often?: Well, personally problems that we have because we work outside would be the weather. For example, if it rains, we have to leave the job, it’s a problem that we can have. Also, problems with language, sometimes we can’t understand people and we need to learn more [English]. This is another type of problem. And another would be…those are the main ones that I’ve had. If someone doesn’t know much English it makes it a little hard.

What are some things the community of Costa Mesa could do to help improve the lives of people like yourself?: More than anything, lots of us day-laborers are undocumented and I think that one of the main things that they can do is obtain immigration reform to help get permission to work, a driver’s license, not such drastic things cause it would be really difficult. We came to this country to better our lives and some of us deserve it. Although, there are some [people] who don’t deserve that. But I think that the community of Costa Mesa, or in general, the country would look at people specifically to check people’s records; this would help this type of person. An immigration reform is very important. More than anything, in my case, I have all my family here, I have my children; they have studied, but we’re undocumented and we can’t buy property or anything because we don’t have good social security. In general, what this country should do is check the on people helping this country so it can continue forward. This is what I can recommend. An immigration reform. And those not to take those that are undocumented from their homes. If someone is working to better themselves or has bettered themselves and are helping the country prosper, it seems like they should get a prize for that. Personally, it seems the best thing. I don’t know.
INTERVIEW DATE: 2/17/07
START TIME: 8:12 AM
END TIME: 9:08 AM
WORKER INTERVIEW #9

Demographics

Name: Antonio
Age: 53 years-old
City of residence: Costa Mesa
Country of birth: Mexico

Length of time living in the US: No answer
Who do you live with?: No answer

Monthly expenses (rent, auto/transit, food, etc.): $500/month.
Monthly income from all sources: No answer.
Monthly amount paid in family support/remittances: $200 bimonthly to sons in Mexico.

Do you have a California Driver’s license/ID?: No, don’t have a driver’s license.

Education/Basic Skills

Number of years of formal education: I finished elementary school.
Do you hold a degree?: No.

How well can you Speak/Read/Write English?: Speak: a little; Write: nothing; Read: a little.
Are you able to use a personal computer? The internet?: No; no.

Where do you generally use a computer/internet?: N/a.
What do you know about local educational/job skill training services?: No, I haven’t used them and I haven’t really looked for things like that.

Have you ever used any local educational/job skill training services?: No.

Current Work/Work History/Occupational Skills

How many days/hours a week do you work as a day laborer?: 8 hours a day; 30 hours a week. There’s lots of work that people need like putting down floors, masonry work. There’s been many times that I have been offered a certain amount of money and they [employers] will pay it, yes. The boss will come by and say, “Who knows how to do…” such and such, like paint and things like that. And they will ask everyone.
Do you work a job other than as a day laborer? What is that job? How many hours a week do you work it?: No.

What do you like about your current work situation?: All the work that I do as a day-laborer is not bad. Especially things like painting are pretty relaxed. Or construction, all of those kinds of job. I don’t want to do any other kinds of work...I like doing basic things. It’s not like working in a factory where you spend your whole day in dimly lit places and you’re inside all the time.

What don’t you like about your current work situation?: Sometimes there aren’t any jobs and you have to go far away to find one, but that’s what you have to do. And sometimes there are occasions where they [employers] won’t pay you. Also sometimes they [bosses] will call the police and you might have to go to jail or pay a fine.

The only thing I don’t like about my job is that you don’t know what kind of person can come to hire you. Or how the job experience is going to be...are they a good person, a bad person? There are employers who will ask you how much you want to make. On the corner they will ask someone this and they can take advantage of us.

There have been times where a boss will tell me at the end of the day that he likes the way that I work and will give me more work. One time someone told me that they wanted to take me to work in Spain. They told me, come with me, I’ll help you and get your papers and everything, get a visa. And this was all talk. This is why I say you don’t know how the person is going to be.

What kind of work do you usually do?: I usually work with stones and drywall.

What kind of work have you done in the past in the US? In home country?: Yes, I had a job doing work on farms, but I didn’t like it because they treated me badly there. There was work picking pumpkins...[unclear], tomatoes. Yes, I left because they treated me badly. I went to work for an American who wanted me to clean...[unclear]. In Mexico, I worked on farms with corn, peanuts, lots of different things.

What kinds of work can you do? Tell me everything you could do right now if someone came to hire you?: No answer.

What could you not do? What do you wish you could do?: If there’s a kind of job that would give a better opportunity, like plumbing, I would like to do that. One time this American lady asked me, “Do you know how to do plumbing?” And I said that I didn’t but I had experience doing it before. If I knew English I could have more opportunities.

What skills do you think would most help improve your chances of finding a better job?: No answer.

How do you usually find work?: What I have to do right now is go to the corners to find a job.

Work Problems

Have you ever experienced any type of abuses by your employer while working as a day laborer? (Examples: Nonpayment, paid less than agreed, left at work site, violence, insulted, worked more hours than agreed, etc.): No, I have never been treated badly.
Have you ever been injured or made ill while working as a day laborer? (Def.: Injuries or illnesses linked to events or exposures in the work environment that caused or contributed to the condition or aggravated a preexisting condition): No, I haven’t gotten sick on the job.

Did you receive care for this injury/illness?: No, I don’t know where to get medical care.

About This Work Site

On most days, how many workers come to this site?: About 50-60 workers come to this site.

On most days, how many employers come to this site?: 2-3 employers a day come to this site.

What is the usual length of work you find (1 day, 1 week, 1 month, etc.)?: 2-3 days a week. There might be 30-40, 25 or ten people that are needed for a job. This might be needed for 3 days or more. And when this happens, sometimes they’ll get a bus to bring people over there. We’ll go to clean, to do all kinds of work.

How much do you usually earn from this work (per hour or per day?)?: No answer.

How often do the police come to this site?: The police come here every day.

Have you ever been given a ticket by the police?: No, I haven’t gotten a ticket.

Do you ever look for work in other locations? If so, where?: Yes, I look for jobs in Laguna Niguel.

Worker Centers

Have you ever used a day-labor hiring center?: Yes, the one on 17th Street.

What did you think of the center?: I thought it was good, it helped get us jobs.

What services did you use?: No services.

How effective do you think it was?: Yes, I thought it was very effective. The trust that someone could have in something like the job center is that you [workers] get employers that they [job center] know. You get trust on both sides, employers and workers.

Would you like to use an organized hiring center here in Costa Mesa? Why/Why not?: Yes, I would like to use one to be able to find jobs more easily.

What recommendations can you give to those considering opening a day labor hiring center here in Costa Mesa?: I would ask that they help us, and that it would be a big help. It would be better to have one, right?

General

What are some of the problems/difficulties you face most often?: No, I haven’t had any major problems.
What are some things the community of Costa Mesa could do to help improve the lives of people like yourself?: Only that the people have the desire to help us, treat us well and are able to offer us work. That people help us, that the city is more considerate of the things that we [workers] need.
INTERVIEW DATE: 2/17/07  
START TIME: 9:45 AM  
END TIME: 10:10 AM  
WORKER INTERVIEW #10

Demographics

Name: Alfredo  
Age: 28 years-old  
City of residence: Costa Mesa  
Country of birth: Mexico  
Length of time living in the US: 8 years

Who do you live with? How many people live in your apartment?: Lives with his family (6 people).

Monthly expenses (rent, auto/transit, food, etc.): $1,500  
Monthly income from all sources: $1,200 a month is a bad month.  
Monthly amount paid in family support/remittances: $300/month  
Do you have a California Driver’s license/ID?: No; no.

Education/Basic Skills

Number of years of formal education: Up to 6th grade.  
Do you hold a degree?: No.  
How well can you Speak/Read/Write English?: Speaking: a little; Reading: not at all; Writing: a little.

Are you able to use a personal computer? The internet: No; no.  
Where do you generally use a computer/internet?: N/a.  
What do you know about local educational/job skill training services?: No, there aren’t any [job centers].  
Have you ever used any local educational/job skill training services?: No, never.

Current Work/Work History/Occupational Skills

How many days/hours a week do you work as a day laborer?: 8 hours a day; 5 days a week.
Do you work a job other than as a day laborer? What is that job? How many hours a week do you work it?: No.

What do you like about your current work situation?: Well, what I like about my job is painting. I like starting work early in the morning like before 6 a.m. and getting to leave by 3 p.m. That’s all.

What don’t you like about your current work situation?: [I don’t like] to work a lot and get paid little. That’s about it.

What kind of work do you usually do?: I do construction work.

What kind of work have you done in the past in the US? In home country?: I’ve worked on a farm picking apples. In Mexico I also worked on farms picking tomatoes.

What kinds of work can you do? Tell me everything you could do right now if someone came to hire you?: Here? Or in Mexico? I know how to paint, put in flooring, gardening. I would tell them that I can do anything that they need. I can do almost anything, cleaning.

What could you not do? What do you wish you could do?: Well, use a computer for example. Well, everything that I mentioned before. I would like to work in a store selling things.

What skills do you think would most help improve your chances of finding a better job?: Learning English [would be helpful]. That’s all, it. Learning English would be the best the best thing to do.

How do you usually find work?: Well, like around here, I find jobs on the corner [by 7-11].

Work Problems

Have you ever experienced any type of abuses by your employer while working as a day laborer? (Examples: Nonpayment, paid less than agreed, left at work site, violence, insulted, worked more hours than agreed, etc.): Yes, someone told me the other day that they would pay me for 4 days and they only paid me for 3 days. They took advantage of me.

Have you ever been injured or made ill while working as a day laborer? (Def.: Injuries or illnesses linked to events or exposures in the work environment that caused or contributed to the condition or aggravated a preexisting condition): No, never.

Did you receive care for this injury/illness?: Never been hurt; doesn’t know about clinics he may attend in the area.

Have you ever missed work because of this injury/illness?: One time my wife was sick and I had to take two days off to take care of her.

About This Work Site

On most days, how many workers come to this site?: 40 a day.

On most days, how many employers come to this site?: 4-5 a day.
What is the usual length of work you find (1 day, 1 week, 1 month, etc.)?: 2 days.

How much do you usually earn from this work (per hour or per day)?: $10/hour

How often do the police come to this site?: Yes, they come here and harass us a lot. [They come here] four times a day.

Have you ever been given a ticket by the police?: No, never.

Do you ever look for work in other locations? If so, where?: No, I just come here.

Worker Centers

Have you ever used a day-labor hiring center?: No.

What did you think of the center? What services did you use? How effective do you think it was?: N/a.

Would you like to use an organized hiring center here in Costa Mesa? Why/Why not?: Yes, so the police won't bug us. And for security.

What recommendations can you give to those considering opening a day labor hiring center here in Costa Mesa?: That they pay us well. To offer English classes. Help us get work so we don't have to look in the street. To [help us] find better bosses, better ways to get paid. To have numbers to an office where we can call when an employer doesn't pay us so they [job center staff] can talk to them.

General

What are some of the problems/difficulties you face most often?: There isn't money to pay the rent. You have to deal with that. Well, there's no jobs and no employers. No, that's it. Everything else is fine. That's why we hope they open the job center. So it's more safe.

What are some things the community of Costa Mesa could do to help improve the lives of people like yourself?: They should open a job center to give more help finding work. To change the law with the police and immigration. To make laws that protect us with employers when we are working. Better treatment from employers.
INTERVIEW DATE: 2/17/07
START TIME: 8:45 AM
END TIME: 10:27 AM
WORKER INTERVIEW #1

Demographics

Name: Alejandro

Age: 26 years-old

City of residence: Costa Mesa

Country of birth: Mexico

Length of time living in the US: 3 years.

Who do you live with? How many people live in your apartment?: Family and friends—6 people total.

Monthly expenses (rent, auto/transit, food, etc.): $1,000

Monthly income from all sources: Half my monthly expenses.

Monthly amount paid in family support/remittances: Yes, $100/three months.

Do you have a California Driver’s license/ID?: No; no.

Education/Basic Skills

Number of years of formal education: Up to 6th grade.

Do you hold a degree?: No.

How well can you Speak/Read/Write English?: Speak: a little, Write: a little, Read: a little.

Are you able to use a personal computer? The internet?: No; no.

Where do you generally use a computer/internet?: N/a.

What do you know about local educational/job skill training services?: No.

Have you ever used any local educational/job skill training services?: No.

Current Work/Work History/Occupational Skills

How many days/hours a week do you work as a day laborer?: Only Saturday and Sunday.

Do you work a job other than as a day laborer? What is that job?: I work in a factory assembling vacuums.
**What do you like about your current work situation?:** If you get a job somewhere else, they pay you only minimum wage. But if you get a job here, they will pay you a little more.

**What don’t you like about your current work situation?:** I don’t like that some people see us as delinquents. Some might think that we smoke marijuana or things like that. [unclear]. The police come around every day and bother us. If you’re on Harbor and [unclear] they’ll take you away.

**What kind of work do you usually do?:** They’ll hire you to paint.

**What kind of work have you done in the past in the US? In home country?:** Assembling vacuums, I worked in a restaurant, and before I came here [Costa Mesa], I worked on a farm. In Mexico, I sold fruit on the street.

**What kinds of work can you do? Tell me everything you could do right now if someone came to hire you?:** I can paint houses, gardening, I can work in a restaurant as a dishwasher.

**What could you not do? What do you wish you could do?:** I can’t do construction, there’s a lot of money to make with that. I would like to do that, and learn about all that kind of work.

**What skills do you think would most help improve your chances of finding a better job?:** Construction.

**How do you usually find work?:** I get out here at 6 in the morning to look for work. Stuff that people need. There’s sometimes that there is no work.

**Work Problems**

**Have you ever experienced any type of abuses by your employer while working as a day laborer? (Examples: Nonpayment, paid less than agreed, left at work site, violence, insulted, worked more hours than agreed, etc.):** One time at the job center, there were these four American guys who didn’t pay me when I painted their house…I thought I would work the next day and they would pay me, but they didn’t. I worked for 3-4 hours. There’s a lot of racism…in Fresno, some Americans were harassing me. They hit me in the face, and insulted me.

**Have you ever been injured or made ill while working as a day laborer? (Def.: Injuries or illnesses linked to events or exposures in the work environment that caused or contributed to the condition or aggravated a preexisting condition):** Well…one time I got sick, and went somewhere to get help…I went to a salvadora [natural medicine], the second time, the employer knew that I was sick, and he helped me get treatment…he’s a good person. He’s German, although he looks American.

**Did you receive care for this injury/illness?:** [unclear]

**Have you ever missed work because of this injury/illness?:** One time I had to miss work because I had TB but I had treatment and after a month, I was better. I went to a clinic. No, I don’t have a doctor or clinic I go to.

**About This Work Site**
On most days, how many workers come to this site?: On Saturday and Sunday about 25-30 people.

On most days, how many employers come to this site?: Like 5-10.

What is the usual length of work you find (1 day, 1 week, 1 month, etc.)?: Sometimes for a day, on the weekend.

How much do you usually earn from this work (per hour or per day)?: $50-$70, it depends on the hours. If you do a job like construction, you can get $80/day.

How often do the police come to this site?: Yes, they come here about 2-3 times/day. There are times they don’t come around.

Have you ever been given a ticket by the police?: Well, I come here because it’s close to my house. But about six months ago, I went to Home Depot on Harbor, there’s a lot of jobs there. They pay you more over there too. One time I got taken by the police. I was there the whole day…from about 11 a.m. to about 12 a.m. the next day. It happened in Santa Ana. Most of the time they take people over there. If you don’t have the money, they keep you there or they deport you. I got the money through Insurance Loan [lender].

Do you ever look for work in other locations? If so, where?: Yes, but for me I know employers that come around here regularly.

Worker Centers

Have you ever used a day-labor hiring center?: What did you think of the center? What services did you use? How effective do you think it was?: Would you like to use an organized hiring center here in Costa Mesa? Why/Why not?: No answer

What recommendations can you give to those considering opening a day labor hiring center here in Costa Mesa?: Yes, that they should open a new job center, that it’s necessary. I would want them to have a place where we could hang out and look for jobs with dignity, and where we wouldn’t have problems with the police. And to know bosses that are good to work for.

General

What are some of the problems/difficulties you face most often?: Yes, for example learning English and speaking. If we don’t know it [English] it makes it difficult to get things done.

What are some things the community of Costa Mesa could do to help improve the lives of people like yourself?: Also to have a place that teaches you skills, like carpentry, I think there are schools in Santa Ana, but it costs a lot. And they could give painting classes and construction courses too. To learn skills that better to cater to the needs of the Americans here, because in Mexico things are different.
Demographics

Name: Maria
Age: 39 years old
City of residence: Costa Mesa
Country of birth: Mexico
Length of time living in the US: 16-17 years.

Who do you live with? How many people live in your apartment?: With family, 4 people in all.

Monthly expenses (rent, auto/transit, food, etc.): $4,000

Monthly income from all sources: Sometimes I have a good month; sometimes I have a bad month. It depends.

Monthly amount paid in family support/remittances: Well, right now I don’t send a lot, but when I was younger I would send more when I didn’t have my own family. I would send $200-$300/month.

Do you have a California Driver’s license/ID?: Yes, thank God I have a driver’s license and my papers, every thing that the law requires. Before I had papers, I used the job center to look for work like all the guys out here. Like housekeeping jobs. It’s very hard. And now it’s a lot harder because you can’t get a driver’s license. I think it’s so hard to come here and not know English, have no car, and have no place to live. Employers ask more and more of you all the time. They’ll ask you, “Oh do you speak English?” When you’re in your own country [before you get here], you don’t think about things like that. And now you’re here you know that it’s a problem. And sometimes you won’t get a job because you don’t speak English or you don’t have any ID or anything. That’s how things happen. The American dream of being here, you think, I’m going over there [United States] and things will be better, but when you get here you realize that it’s not like that. [You realize] that you need a lot of things. And other than that, you realize that it’s harder for someone who doesn’t know the language, who has no papers. I understood this very well. It makes me laugh when they say, “I can do it, I can do it”. And they can “lograr” for a lot, but now I have my kids and my husband. I feel good, sometimes I feel bad. I have my papers. But that’s where I am now. I see the boys who are here [on the corner], sometimes they [police] take them, or they warn them not to be here. They’re scared of the police. They think, “Are they going to take me or deport me?” In 2-3 days they can deport you back to your country. I think that everyone looks...looks to how they can survive. And it’s very hard. I feel

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1 The subject of interview #12 was a woman who previously used the Costa Mesa Day Labor center to find domestic work. Study staff met her while conducting interviews at Burger Hut, on the corner of 17th and Placentia. She has never stood on the corner to seek work alongside the male laborers. As such, some questions in this interview were adapted accordingly.
bad for them [the day-laborers]. And now I have my kids here...they have the opportunity...[unclear]. It's been 10 years since I've looked for a job here. They paid me [at the dry cleaner's] $0.10 to iron sleeves on mountains and mountains of shirts. I worked a lot and the only thing I got out of it was arthritis. And even so, I continued to iron. Now I wouldn't do that kind of work because I learned English, I have my papers. And I do everything because of my kids. And that's the American dream. I'm not trying to say that all Americans are bad. There are lots of great Americans here. I've had employers who are good people. There are other people who have not been so lucky.

**Education/Basic Skills**

**Number of years of formal education:** You would never believe it, but in my country, I was a lawyer. When I came here, I couldn't practice as a lawyer. It's not the same here as it is in Mexico. In Mexico, I worked in an office as a lawyer. And what happened? I had to work as a housekeeper.

**Do you hold a degree?:** Law degree in Mexico.

**How well can you Speak/Read/Write English?:** My English is pretty good, people understand me. Reading I understand about 50% of what I read and I can write okay too.

**Are you able to use a personal computer? The internet?:** No; no.

**Where do you generally use a computer/internet?:** N/a.

**What do you know about local educational/job skill training services?:** There isn't anything here.

**Have you ever used any local educational/job skill training services?:** No.

**Current Work/Work History/Occupational Skills**

**How many days/hours a week do you work?:** Housekeeping; I clean about one house a day; sometimes 2-3 days a week.

**What do you like about your current work situation?:** I like my job because I'm my own boss.

**What don't you like about your current work situation?:** There are some occasions where there is a lot of work. It makes me laugh that Americans won't work for minimum wage, or less than minimum wage, and we work more than that we should. And one works a lot for nothing [money].

**What kind of work do you usually do?:** Right now, as a housekeeper.

**What kind of work have you done in the past in the US? In home country?:** I worked in a factory ironing, in a hotel, housekeeping, and babysitting. In Mexico I worked as a lawyer.

**What kinds of work can you do? Tell me everything you could do right now if someone came to hire you?:** Not very many things, but I can learn what is needed. I would ask, how much are you going to pay me? And then I can learn. It's that much [that I can do], but I have learned a lot since I got here.
What could you not do? What do you wish you could do?: I want to study more here. I would like to be a social worker to work with people in hospitals. I would like to help people to learn how to assimilate to this country. When someone comes here they are disoriented. They don’t know the language, the culture, how things are here.

What skills do you think would most help improve your chances of finding a better job?: To study more. I always tell my kids to study more and more.

How do you usually find work?: I have my [business] cards. I put them on people’s doors. Sometimes I work with someone who refers me to a friend or something.

Have you ever experienced any type of abuses by your employer while working? (Examples: Nonpayment, paid less than agreed, left at work site, violence, insulted, worked more hours than agreed, etc.): When I was working in the factory ironing, they paid me less than minimum wage. They treated me badly there, told me to hurry up [with my work]. All the bosses would say if you worked overtime, they would pay you as normally.

Have you ever been injured or made ill while working? (Def.: Injuries or illnesses linked to events or exposures in the work environment that caused or contributed to the condition or aggravated a preexisting condition): No [has medical insurance, knows about SOS Free clinic].

About This Work Site

What is the usual length of work you find (1 day, 1 week, 1 month, etc.)?: It depends on the person. Usually I work one day a week for someone.

How much do you usually earn from this work (per hour or per day?)?: They pay me by the day, sometimes $50 or $60.

On most days, how many workers come to this site?: There are a lot of people that come here [to this corner].

How often do the police come to this site?: Yes, I have seen them here a lot. Sometimes the guys get warnings and they get out of here quickly.

Worker Centers

Have you ever used a day-labor hiring center?: Yes, I used the one that was here before in Costa Mesa. When I needed a job, I would look there.

Would you like to use an organized hiring center here in Costa Mesa? Why/Why not?: I thought it was a good idea to keep people out of the street, there isn’t anywhere to look for work. I would like to see another one open up. Not for me, but for the people who are here. It would be very good to have a job center. Also, to help get rid of employer abuse.

What recommendations can you give to those considering opening a day labor hiring center here in Costa Mesa?: Yes, there is more security in a job center, more organization and there could be a record of people’s abilities. There should also be a job center for women so that they can find housekeeping jobs or babysitting jobs, and English courses.


**General**

**What are some of the problems/difficulties you face most often?:** I don’t have any problems right now that happen a lot.

**What are some things the community of Costa Mesa could do to help improve the lives of people like yourself?:** They could open a job center. Also an education center for adults and offer daycare for children.
INTERVIEW DATE: 2/17/07
START TIME: 10:41 AM
END TIME: 11:00 AM
WORKER INTERVIEW #13

Demographics

Name: Jose Antonio Fernandez
Age: 32 years-old
City of residence: Costa Mesa
Country of birth: Honduras
Length of time living in the US: 3 years

Who do you live with? How many people live in your apartment?: With my family and friends—6 in all.

Monthly expenses (rent, auto/transit, food, etc.): $1,500
Monthly income from all sources: $1,000/month
Monthly amount paid in family support/remittances: $300/month

Education/Basic Skills

Number of years of formal education: Up to 2nd grade.
Do you hold a degree?: No.
How well can you Speak/Read/Write English?: Speak: little, Read: little, Write: little.
Are you able to use a personal computer? The internet?: No.
Where do you generally use a computer/internet?: N/a.
What do you know about local educational/job skill training services?: No.
Have you ever used any local educational/job skill training services?: No, I don’t know of anything.

Current Work/Work History/Occupational Skills

How many days/hours a week do you work as a day laborer?: 40 hours/week.
Do you work a job other than as a day laborer? What is that job? How many hours a week do you work it?: No.

What do you like about your current work situation?: I’m pretty happy with my job because it allows me to pay the rent, keep sending money home. I like it because it’s teaching
me how to work with different materials like stone and concrete, it’s helping me to learn more skills.

**What don’t you like about your current work situation?:** Sometimes people won’t pay you that much for what you do.

**What kind of work do you usually do?:** Usually I paint or put in drywall.

**What kind of work have you done in the past in the US? In home country?:** Jobs that I find here [on the corner] are painting, gardening, putting up drywall. In Honduras, there are a lot of farms to work on, you can

**What kinds of work can you do? Tell me everything you could do right now if someone came to hire you?:** Most of the work I have done is painting, and drywall.

**What could you not do? What do you wish you could do?:** Learn how to put ‘talles’

**What skills do you think would most help improve your chances of finding a better job?:** No answer

**How do you usually find work?:** I usually find a job from friends or hear about something.

**Work Problems**

**Have you ever experienced any type of abuses by your employer while working as a day laborer? (Examples: Nonpayment, paid less than agreed, left at work site, violence, insulted, worked more hours than agreed, etc.):** Oh yes, people [workers] have not been paid enough before. It’s because if you don’t know English, you can’t negotiate how much they are going to pay you.

**Have you ever been injured or made ill while working as a day laborer? (Def.: Injuries or illnesses linked to events or exposures in the work environment that caused or contributed to the condition or aggravated a preexisting condition):** No, thank God no.

**About This Work Site**

**On most days, how many workers come to this site?:** Sometimes as many as 60 workers or more. But there are other times where there are less people, like say 40 or so. It’s because most of them don’t find jobs, and also the police come here and make people leave.

**On most days, how many employers come to this site?:** Sometimes, there’s about 5 or a little more.

**What is the usual length of work you find (1 day, 1 week, 1 month, etc.):** Sometimes it’ll be 15 days before I find a job.

**How much do you usually earn from this work (per hour or per day):** I earn $10/hour and I work about 8 hours a day.

**How often do the police come to this site?:** They usually come here.
**Have you ever been given a ticket by the police?:** One day, when I was working for someone, I was going to the bus stop and the police came and took me. They took me to the jail held me for 6 hours and I had to pay $300 to get out. I had the money to pay on me since I had worked, so I was able to pay.

**Worker Centers**

**Have you ever used a day-labor hiring center?:** Oh yes, I have used one before. On Placentia and 17th St.

**What did you think of the center?** It made it a little easier to find a job.

**What services did you use?** Yes, I used some of the services there.

**How effective do you think it was?:** Yes, I thought it was good thing to have.

**Would you like to use an organized hiring center here in Costa Mesa? Why/Why not?:** Yes, it would be good to have a job center close to my house. It would be more secure and the police couldn’t bother us.

**What recommendations can you give to those considering opening a day labor hiring center here in Costa Mesa?:** It’s important that they open one because it would be a good idea.

**General**

**What are some of the problems/difficulties you face most often?:** No, none really.

**What are some things the community of Costa Mesa could do to help improve the lives of people like yourself?:** I would them to open a place that would teach people how to do things. Like learn English so we can advance ourselves. [unclear]. If you don’t know English, it can be really hard.
INTERVIEW DATE: 2/18/07
START TIME: 5:13 PM
END TIME: 6:30 PM
WORKER INTERVIEW #14

Demographics

Name: Juan Gabriel
Age: 45 years-old
City of residence: Costa Mesa
Country of birth: Mexico
Length of time living in the US: 14 years

Who do you live with? How many people live in your apartment?: Lives alone [not with his family], but lives with 4 kids and two other adults
Monthly expenses (rent, auto/transit, food, etc.): $1,500
Monthly income from all sources: No idea.
Do you have a California Driver’s license/ID?: No; has ID from Mexican consulate.

Education/Basic Skills

Number of years of formal education: Elementary school—learned various things by reading on his own.
Do you hold a degree?: No.
How well can you Speak/Read/Write English?: Fair/good.
Are you able to use a personal computer? The internet?: No; no.
Where do you generally use a computer/internet?: No, but it’s very necessary to know.
What do you know about local educational/job skill training services?: I used to take English classes at the adult school, and I learned lots of English and now I’m able to talk with more people. Yes, I think it’s my duty to help others who don’t know English that well.
Have you ever used any local educational/job skill training services?: No, I don’t know. The only thing that I can remember is when contractors would come and teach us how to use some machines.

Current Work/Work History/Occupational Skills

How many days/hours a week do you work as a day laborer?: Depends. If you paint a house or something it takes more time; it depends on the types of work. Usually about 40 hours a week. There have been times in my life that I have found work very easily and it wasn’t
challenging. Like when I worked for a factory near the industrial area of Baker and [unclear]. I took English classes there and it was very easy. It’s not that difficult to find a job, but for some people it is.

Do you work a job other than as a day laborer? No.

What do you like about your current work situation?: Relationships with people. I learned English and that was a great help, I got used to the way things work around here and…[unclear].

What don’t you like about your current work situation?: No place to work, or no space to work in. I don’t like that the city doesn’t offer much help for us. Sometimes the weather is a problem, like right now it’s nice, but sometimes it gets really hot.

What kind of work do you usually do?: Remodeling and painting houses, usually.

What kind of work have you done in the past in the US? In home country?: In the US I have worked as a gardener, a cook, a painter. In Mexico, I worked doing different kind of work—business…[unclear].

What kinds of work can you do? Tell me everything you could do right now if someone came to hire you?: I can do painting, construction.

What could you not do? What do you wish you could do?: To learn how to [unclear].

What skills do you think would most help improve your chances of finding a better job?: In this case, a job that would pay us well would help the most. A driver’s license to drive buses, or just to get around to jobs.

How do you usually find work?: I do what I have to do—like look on the streets if I have to, but it’s not hard for me to find work.

Work Problems

Have you ever experienced any type of abuses by your employer while working as a day laborer? (Examples: Nonpayment, paid less than agreed, left at work site, violence, insulted, worked more hours than agreed, etc.): Well, there have been times where they [employers] tell you one thing, and another thing happens. If I had a contract, I would know what was going on, what my rights are. One time, I didn’t get paid.

Have you ever been injured or made ill while working as a day laborer? (Def.: Injuries or illnesses linked to events or exposures in the work environment that caused or contributed to the condition or aggravated a preexisting condition): Yes, I have gotten injured on the job [reason unclear].

Did you receive care for this injury/illness?: Yes, at a hospital. If you don’t say anything, no one will listen to you.

Have you ever missed work because of this injury/illness?: Yes, there was one time when I missed 18 days of work.

About This Work Site
On most days, how many workers come to this site?: 30-50, or 60 people. Sometimes 10, when there really isn’t a lot here.

What is the usual length of work you find (1 day, 1 week, 1 month, etc.)?: Varies. It really depends…[unclear].

How much do you usually earn from this work (per hour or per day)?: I usually earn about $10/hour and work about 8 hours a day, 5 days a week.

How often do the police come to this site?: The police come here often, but they don’t really say anything to me. They usually come in the morning when there are a lot of people.

Have you ever been given a ticket by the police?: No, I haven’t gotten a ticket.

Do you ever look for work in other locations? If so, where?: No, I haven’t looked for work in other places.

Worker Centers

Have you ever used a day-labor hiring center?: Yes, I started using it (Costa Mesa) in 1995.

What did you think of the center?: It was a help to find a job and it really helped the workers. It gave us a place to find work. It helped the people to prepare themselves to work; it taught us how to speak English.

What services did you use?: I took English classes.

How effective do you think it was?: Yes, it helped a lot because it was…[unclear].

Would you like to use an organized hiring center here in Costa Mesa? Why/Why not?: Yes, I would like to use a job center because it can help advance myself, it would help us. Working with Mika [in planning/operating the job center] would be good.

What recommendations can you give to those considering opening a day labor hiring center here in Costa Mesa?: [unclear]…To try to help us look for work, open a job center. It’s difficult, but not impossible.

General

What are some of the problems/difficulties you face most often?: When they closed the job center, there was a lot of workers without jobs…[unclear].

What are some things the community of Costa Mesa could do to help improve the lives of people like yourself?: The churches here could help us out. Also they could have English classes in the job centers.
Demographics

Name: Pedro

Age: 50 years-old

City of residence: Costa Mesa

Country of birth: Mexico

Length of time living in the US: 3 years

Who do you live with? How many people live in your apartment?: Family—5 people in all.

Monthly expenses (rent, auto/transit, food, etc.): $1,700

Monthly income from all sources: Half my monthly expenses

Monthly amount paid in family support/remittances: Sometimes I send money home, $80/month.

Do you have a California Driver's license/ID?: No; no.

Education/Basic Skills

Number of years of formal education: Up to 6th grade.

Do you hold a degree?: No.

How well can you Speak/Read/Write English?: Speak: a little. Read: a little. Write: not at all.

Are you able to use a personal computer? The internet?: No; no.

Where do you generally use a computer/internet?: N/a.

What do you know about local educational/job skill training services?: There isn’t any here.

Have you ever used any local educational/job skill training services?: No, I haven’t used any.

Current Work/Work History/Occupational Skills

How many days/hours a week do you work as a day laborer?: There are times that I work 40 hours a week. I work six days a week.
Do you work a job other than as a day laborer? What is that job? How many hours a week do you work it?: No.

What do you like about your current work situation?: I like doing construction. I like it all; it’s just good to work.

What don’t you like about your current work situation?: No, there’s nothing that I don’t like. Everything is fine.

What kind of work do you usually do?: Well, everything because we are laborers. Sometimes drywall. We don’t have a specific job. I can put in tile.

What kind of work have you done in the past in the US? In home country?: I’ve done everything. I didn’t come here trained to do something, but I learn little by little. We came here from another country not knowing the language, but we learn little by little because we have to. I can do everything. I can do masonry work, cleaning. In Mexico, I did a lot of construction, but it’s different here because the materials aren’t the same as in Mexico. It’s very different.

What kinds of work can you do? Tell me everything you could do right now if someone came to hire you?: Like I told you, everything—whatever people need to get done. I would say whatever is needed, like I can do gardening, put in drywall, cleaning.

What could you not do? What do you wish you could do?: There’s things that I have never done, that I cannot do. Like, I can’t do carpentry work. I can’t do plumbing work either. No, I already know how to do a lot of things

What skills do you think would most help improve your chances of finding a better job?: That kind of stuff is for younger people. I’m already older and there’s not a good chance that someone like me would stay here. We needed come here because we necessarily waned to. We came to work and make money. It’s not possible for someone my age to learn a skill. It’s more for the younger generation. If I was younger, I would want to learn some kind of specific skill.

How do you usually find work?: By the employers that I met at the job center.

Work Problems

Have you ever experienced any type of abuses by your employer while working as a day laborer? (Examples: Nonpayment, paid less than agreed, left at work site, violence, insulted, worked more hours than agreed, etc.): No, thank God I haven’t. I’ve had a good experience with the people here, they are good people. The bosses here think that if you work well, then they will treat you well. Sometimes people [workers] don’t get paid by the employers—this happens a lot. But no, I haven’t had this happen to me.

Have you ever been injured or made ill while working as a day laborer? (Def.: Injuries or illnesses linked to events or exposures in the work environment that caused or contributed to the condition or aggravated a preexisting condition): No, never. I’ve gotten a small cut here and there but nothing serious. No, I don’t know where I could find a clinic here. I haven’t had to use one so far.
Did you receive care for this injury/illness?: N/a.

Have you ever missed work because of this injury/illness?: No, I haven’t missed work, everything has been fine so far.

About This Work Site

On most days, how many workers come to this site?: I don’t know because don’t come here [by PK Burger]. I get phone calls to work. But I would say about 30 people.

What is the usual length of work you find (1 day, 1 week, 1 month, etc.)?: Sometimes for a day, a week, or month. It just depends on how big the job is.

How much do you usually earn from this work (per hour or per day)?: I get about $72 a day.

How often do the police come to this site?: I’m not here often, so I don’t know. I don’t look for work here.

Have you ever been given a ticket by the police?: No, never.

Do you ever look for work in other locations? If so, where?: No, employers call me. If I have the time, I'll go work for them. Sometimes when I can’t find work, I’ll come here to look. When I’m hungry, I have to look.

Worker Centers

Have you ever used a day-labor hiring center?: Yes, Costa Mesa.

What did you think of the center?: I think it’s a good idea to have a job center. I’m thankful that I had the opportunity to find work [through the job center]. I’m thankful to the people [who had the job center]. There’s more security for a worker, and if an employer comes to take someone to work, the job center knows about it.

What services did you use?: No, nothing much. Well, they had a place for employers to look for employees.

How effective do you think it was?: Yes, there was more confidence to go on a job with an employer, on both parts really—employer and employee. Also at the job center they had all your information organized in a file.

Would you like to use an organized hiring center here in Costa Mesa? Why/Why not?: Yes, because we need one. Some people look down upon us because we look for jobs in the street. It would be good to have a place to look for jobs, there would be more order.

What recommendations can you give to those considering opening a day labor hiring center here in Costa Mesa?: Well, they could open a job center to help us. We would be very appreciative. It would be a good idea for everyone. Well, we’re very thankful for the help we have gotten from Christina [of Mika CDC] and others.

General
**What are some of the problems/difficulties you face most often?:** No, I don’t have any problems here. Some of us are illegal and if we are good citizens and don’t do anything against the law, we’ll be okay. There are economic problems, problems that the workers have…well, we came here to work, but we are poor. Thank God I haven’t had a lack of anything. We have enough money to pay the rent and pay for my living expenses. That’s why we came here, so we can do that.

**What are some things the community of Costa Mesa could do to help improve the lives of people like yourself?:** There are lots of people, we all have our own way of thinking so I can’t say for everyone. We are not united [interrelatedness of the workers], we’re disorganized, and it doesn’t help.
Appendix F. Local Workforce Development Resources

- English as a Second Language (ESL) Programs
- Health Services
- Job Placement Services
- Legal/Immigration Resources
- Vocational/Computer Resources
English as a Second Language (ESL) Programs

Corbin Family Resource Center (FACT)
2215 West McFadden Avenue
Santa Ana, CA 92704
Phone: (714) 647-6556
Fax: (714) 953-1972
Website: http://www.factoc.org/corbin.html
Information: Must be 18 years of age. See Santa Ana College, School of Continuing Education. Service area: Santa Ana and Surrounding Areas

Delhi Community Center
505 E. Central Ave.
Santa Ana, CA 92707
Phone: (714) 481-9600
Fax: (714) 481-9699
Website: http://www.delhicenter.com/
Information: ESL levels 1 and 2, morning classes only. Classes are free and open to anyone. No waiting list (3/5/07).

El Centro Cultural de Mexico
310 W 5th Street
Santa Ana, CA 92701
Website: http://www.el-centro.org/
Information: Classes offered Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Classes are free and open to anyone. No waiting list (3/5/07).

First United Methodist Church
420 W 19th St
Costa Mesa, CA 92627
Phone: (949) 548-7727
Information: One class offered Monday nights. Class is free and open to anyone.

Huntington Beach Adult School
16666 Tunstall Lane
Huntington Beach, CA 92647
Phone: (714) 847-2873, x211 (ESL Department)
Fax: (714) 841-2283
Website: http://www.hbadultschool.com/
Information: Seven levels of classes offered mornings, afternoons and evenings. Classes are open to anyone 18 years of age or older. Classes are free. No waiting list (3/5/07). School also has an “ESL Distance Learning Program”. Must have a VCR. Student meets with teacher once a week first for assessment, then to ask questions and to switch videos and written assignments. Also Vocational ESL computer classes (see Vocational/Computer Resources section).

Irvine Adult School
311 West Yale Loop, Portable #3
Irvine, CA 92604
**Phone:** (949) 936-7457
**Fax:** (949) 936-7459
**Website:** http://www.irvineadultschool.com
**Information:** Four levels of instruction taught morning, afternoon, and evening. Classes are free and open to anyone. As of 3/6/07, there is a waiting list for all classes.

**Mesa Verde United Methodist Church**
1701 W. Baker
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
**Phone:** (714) 979-8234
**Fax:** (714) 979-8959
**Website:** http://www.mesaverdeumc.org
**Information:** One class on Tuesday evening. Class is free and open to anyone. No waiting list (3/6/07).

**Newport Mesa Unified School District, Adult Education**
2985-A Bear Street
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
**Phone:** (949) 515-6996
**Fax:** (949) 515-5350
**Website:** http://www.nmusd.us/depts/ae/adult_school.php
**Information:** Seven levels of instruction offered mornings, afternoons and evenings. Classes are free and open to anyone 18 years of age or older. No waiting list (3/5/07). School also has an “ESL Distance Learning Program”. Must have a VCR or DVD player. Student meets with teacher once a week for assessment, then to ask questions and switch videos and written assignments. Also Vocational ESL computer classes (see *Vocational/Computer Resources* section).

**Santa Ana College, School of Continuing Education**
*Centennial Education Center*
2900 West. Edinger Avenue
Santa Ana, CA 92704
**Phone:** (714) 241-5700
*Marketplace Education Center*
201 East Fourth Street
Santa Ana, CA 92701
**Phone:** (714) 564-5760
**Website:** http://ext.sac.edu/continuing%5Feducation/index.htm
**Information:** A full range of classes are offered, morning, afternoon, evening, and weekend schedules, taught at 60 community sites. Classes are free and open to anyone 18 years of age or older.
Health Services

County of Orange Health Care Agency—Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health (MCAH) Program
Costa Mesa Clinic
2845 Mesa Verde Drive East
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
Phone (Appointments): (800) 914-4887
Phone (Information): (800) 564-8448
Website: http://www.ochealthinfo.com/mcah/
Information: Services offered: birth control, prostate exam (men>50 years), colon cancer screening (men>40 years), testicle cancer screening and education, Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) screening and treatment, Hepatitis B shots.

Latino Health Access
1701 N. Main Street, Suite 200
Santa Ana, CA 92706
Phone: (714) 542-7792
Fax: (714) 542-4853
Website: http://www.latinohealthaccess.org/
Information: A local non-profit organization that seeks to improve the quality of life and health of uninsured, under-served people through preventive services and educational programs. Potential CREO partner for health education programming.

Share Our Selves (SOS) Free Clinic
1550 Superior Avenue
Costa Mesa, CA 92627-3653
Phone: (949) 642-3451
Phone (Medical/Dental Clinic): (949) 650-0640
Fax: (949) 642-7885
Website: http://www.shareourselves.org/
Information: Free medical and dental services for adults who can’t otherwise qualify for medical services. Services available as walk-in or by appointment. Other programs includes an eye clinic, mental health services, a food and clothing bank, emergency cash assistance, and comprehensive case management. Patients must be Orange County residents and pass a financial screening.
Job Placement Services

City of Huntington Beach, Luis M. Ochoa Job Center
18131 Gothard Street
Huntington Beach, CA 92647
Phone: (714) 841-0637
Website: http://www.ci.huntingtonbeach.ca.us/CityDepartments/ED/BusinessDevelopment/jobcenter.cfm
Information: Day laborer hiring center. Open 7 days per week, 6am till noon.

Coastline Regional Occupational Program (ROP)
Paul E. Snyder Administrative Center
1001 Presidio Square
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
Phone: (714) 979-1955
Website: http://www.coastlinerop.net/
Information: Career/job placement services available to program participants. See listing in Vocational/Computer Resources.

Labor Ready
2110 Harbor Blvd.
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
Phone: (949) 646-9675
Website: http://www.laborready.com/
Information: Temporary job placement services. Right to work documentation required.

Mexican American Opportunity Foundation – Orange County
502 South Ross St
Santa Ana, CA 92701
Phone: (714) 835-4199
Fax: (714) 835-4398
Website: http://www.maof.org/orange_county_services.asp

Santa Ana W/O/R/K Center
1000 E. Santa Ana Blvd., #200
Santa Ana, CA 92701
Phone: (714) 565-2600
Fax: (714) 565-2601
Website: https://www.santaanaworkcenter.org/
Information: Provides job search, employment and training consolation and referrals to community residents. Right to work documentation may be required for some services.

Youth Employment Service (YES) of the Harbor Area
114 East 19th Street
Costa Mesa, CA 92627
Phone: (949) 642-0474
Website: http://www.netwest1.com/YES/
Information: Job placement and job readiness services for Costa Mesa, Newport Beach, or nearby residents. Must be 14-22 years of age.
**Legal/Immigration Resources**

**American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Southern California**
1616 Beverly Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90026
**Phone (legal intake line):** (213) 977-5253
**Website:** [http://www.aclu-sc.org/Legal/Intake/](http://www.aclu-sc.org/Legal/Intake/)
**Information:** Attorneys represent cases free of charge for civil liberty and civil right violations. Civil liberties include freedom of speech, press, religion, and association; due process; equal protection; and privacy. Civil rights include, voting rights; discrimination based on disability, race, sex, sexual orientation, religion or national origin; police reform; and workers' rights.

Literature available on workers' rights when stopped by police or an immigration official:
- **English:** [http://www.aclu-sc.org/attach/k/kyr_immigration_en.pdf](http://www.aclu-sc.org/attach/k/kyr_immigration_en.pdf)
- **Spanish:** [http://www.aclu-sc.org/attach/k/kyr_immigration_sp.pdf](http://www.aclu-sc.org/attach/k/kyr_immigration_sp.pdf)

**Catholic Charities of Orange County**
**Resettlement, Immigration and Citizenship Program**
1800 East McFadden
Santa Ana, CA 92705-5405
**Phone:** (714) 347-9664
**Website:** [http://www.ccoc.org/](http://www.ccoc.org/)
**Information:** Accredited legal assistance in document preparation for individuals and families seeking assistance with a range of immigration issues including reunification, legalization, adjustment of status, and citizenship preparation. This program provides information and referrals to clients, volunteer training, citizenship education classes, citizenship application assistance, as well as testing and INS interviews. Also provided are services for resettlement and social adjustment.

**Hermandad Mexicana Nacional**
611 Civic Center Dr West
Santa Ana, CA 92701
**Phone:** (714) 541-0250
**Fax:** (714) 541-4597
**Website:** [http://www.hermandadmexicana.org](http://www.hermandadmexicana.org)
**Information:** Provides low-cost legal consultation/referrals and assistance with immigration paperwork, small claim case filing, etc.

**Legal Aid Society of Orange County**
2101 N. Tustin Ave
Santa Ana, California 92705
**Phone:** (800) 834-5001 or (714) 571-5200
**Information:** Hotline provides counseling and referrals from a paralegal. No income or citizenship requirements for telephone consultation. Must live in Orange County or South East Los Angeles.

**Mexican Consulate**
828 North Broadway Street
Santa Ana, California 92701
**Phone (ID(passport appts):** (877) 639-4835;
**Phone (office):** (714) 835-3069, 0042
**Fax:** (714) 835-3472
**Website:** [http://www.sre.gob.mx/santaana](http://www.sre.gob.mx/santaana)
**Information:** Local services for Mexican citizens, including *matricula consular* ID cards and passports.

**National Immigration Law Center**
3435 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 2850
Los Angeles, CA 90010
**Phone:** (213) 639-3900
**Fax:** (213) 639-3911
**Website:** [http://www.nilc.org](http://www.nilc.org)

**Public Law Center**
601 Civic Center Drive, West
Santa Ana, CA 92701
**Phone:** (714) 541-1010
**Website:** [http://www.publiclawcenter.org](http://www.publiclawcenter.org)
**Information:** Free legal counsel available at the following local clinics:
- *Corbin Community Center*, 2215 W. McFadden Ave., Santa Ana
  1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays of each month, 2-4pm. For an appt., call (714) 647-5306
- *Share Our Selves (SOS) Free Clinic*, 1550 Superior Ave., Costa Mesa
  2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of each month, 9-11:30am. For an appt., call (949) 650-0640
**Vocational/Computer Resources**

**Coastline Regional Occupational Program (ROP)**
Paul E. Snyder Administrative Center
1001 Presidio Square
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
**Phone:** (714) 979-1955
**Website:** http://www.coastlinerop.net/
**Information:** Construction technology class includes: blueprint reading, basic plumbing, electrical, masonry, glass, tile, flooring, drywall, carpentry, and roofing repairs. Instruction in English. Other vocational classes available include office technology, Microsoft Office, medical/dental front office, automotive technology, etc. Adult registration fee is $40 per course. Some certification programs require proof of legal right to work. Must be a resident of the school districts served by Coastline ROP (Huntington Beach, Irvine, Newport-Mesa, Saddleback Valley & Tustin Unified School Districts).

**Costa Mesa Branch Library**
1855 Park Ave.
Costa Mesa, CA 92627
**Phone:** (949) 646-8845
**Website:** http://www.ocpl.org
**Information:** 12 computer terminals with internet. Spanish language reading materials. Must have an Orange County Public Library card. Required: photo ID and proof of OC residency (piece of mail).

**Costa Mesa Technology Library**
3033 South Bristol Ave., Suite Q
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
**Phone:** (714) 754-4431
**Website:** http://www.ocpl.org
**Information:** 18 computer terminals with internet. One-on-one and small group training on use of the Internet, Microsoft Office Software, OCPL Catalog and Subscription databases (English only). Classes are free. Reservations required. Must have an Orange County Public Library card. Required: photo ID and proof of OC residency (piece of mail).

**Huntington Beach Adult School**
16666 Tunstall Lane
Huntington Beach, CA 92647
**Phone:** (714) 847-2873
**Fax:** (714) 841-2283
**Website:** http://www.hbadultschool.com/
**Information:** Vocational ESL classes (introductory computer course designed for students with limited English ability) and GED preparation classes are free of charge. A variety of classes from computer basics to more advanced skills (Quickbooks, Adobe Photoshop) have a $45 registration fee. Classes in Medical Assisting, Pharmacy Technician and Woodworking have varied fees. All classes are open to anyone 18 years of age or older.
Irvine Adult School
311 West Yale Loop, Portable #3
Irvine, CA 92604
Phone: (949) 936-7457
Fax: (949) 936-7459
Website: http://www.irvineadultschool.com
Information: Computer classes including basic internet, basic software applications and keyboarding. Course fees range from $20 to $60. Free use of computer based GED preparation software.

Mexican American Opportunity Foundation – Orange County
502 South Ross St
Santa Ana, CA 92701
Phone: (714) 835-4199
Fax: (714) 835-4398
Website: http://www.maof.org/orange_county_services.asp
Information: 3 computer classes in Spanish. Classes are free. See Santa Ana College, School of Continuing Education.

Newport Mesa Unified School District, Adult Education
2985-A Bear Street
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
Phone: (949) 515-6996
Fax: (949) 515-5350
Website: http://www.nmusd.us/depts/ae/adult_school.php
Information: Introduction to computer classes, keyboarding, and Microsoft Office (one class in Spanish). Also, vocational ESL classes (introductory computer course designed for students with limited English ability) and GED preparation classes (in Spanish). All classes are free and open to anyone 18 years of age or older.

Santa Ana College, School of Continuing Education
Centennial Education Center
2900 West Edinger Avenue
Santa Ana, CA 92704
Phone: (714) 241-5700
Marketplace Education Center
201 East Fourth Street
Santa Ana, CA 92701
Phone: (714) 564-5760
Website: http://ext.sac.edu/continuing%5Feducation/index.htm
Information: Classes in adult basic education/literacy, basic computer skills, introduction to computer applications, office employment training program, and computer repair and networking. Also offers GED preparation and citizenship classes. Some classes are in Spanish. Classes are free and open to anyone 18 years of age or older.