On the Corner
Day Labor in the United States

Nik Theodore

Center for Urban Economic Development
University of Illinois at Chicago

Construction Economics Research Network

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Photographs by Francisco Pacheco
National Day Laborer Organizing Network
The study

- 2,660 workers surveyed (random sample)
- 264 hiring sites
  - 221 informal sites
  - 43 worker centers
- 20 states, 46 metropolitan areas, representing every region of the country
The survey

- Based on previous research conducted in LA, NYC, Atlanta
- Six research teams
- Face-to-face surveys, ~40 minutes
- Demographic characteristics
- Labor-market experiences
  - Occupations & work history
  - Wages & earnings
  - Health & safety
  - Abuses
Organization of the day labor market

Nationwide phenomenon

- Approximately 117,600 workers are either looking for day-labor jobs or working as day laborers across the U.S.

- Regional distribution
  - West: 42%
  - East: 23%
  - Southwest: 18%
  - South: 12%
  - Midwest: 4%
Organization of the day labor market

Informal Hiring Sites

- Small hiring sites: 5-20 workers
- Very large sites: 100+ workers
  - San Francisco: 133 workers
  - Phoenix: 138 workers
  - Chicago: 154 workers
  - Langley Park, MD: 349 workers
- Most sites operate year-round
Who are day laborers?

- Predominantly male (98%).
- Mean age is 34 years old.
- Married or living with a partner (43%).
- Have children (63%) of which 29% are U.S. citizens.
Who are day laborers?

Figure 3. Country of Origin

- Mexico: 59%
- Central America: 28%
- United States: 7%
- Other: 0.3%
- South America: 4%
- Caribbean: 2%
- Africa: 0.3%
- Ecuador: 2%
- Peru: 1%
- Other SA: 1%
- Guatemala: 14%
- Honduras: 8%
- El Salvador: 5%
- Other CA: 1%

Who are day laborers?

- Immigrants
  - Residing in U.S. less than 1 year (19%)
  - Residing in U.S. more than 6 years (40%)
- Three-quarters are undocumented immigrants, but 11% have a pending application for an adjustment of their immigration status.
Working day labor

- Employers
  - Private households (49%)
  - Residential construction contractors (43%)

- Mainly manual-labor jobs
  - Construction, moving and hauling, gardening and landscaping, and painting

- More than two-thirds hired repeatedly by the same employer (69%)
Working day labor (cont.)

- Sole source of income (83%)
- Most search for work full-time (70%)
- More than half have worked a regular, permanent job in the U.S.
Wages

Figure 2. Hourly Wages of Day Labor Jobs

Hourly Wage

- Less than $5.15: 1%
- $5.15 to $7.00: 6%
- $7.01 to $9.99: 22%
- $10.00 to $11.99: 46%
- $12.00 or more: 25%
## Infrequent and insecure work

### Monthly Earnings of Day Laborers, Full-Time Workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earnings</th>
<th>June/July 2004</th>
<th>Good Month</th>
<th>Bad Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$400 or less</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$401 to $800</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$801 to $1,200</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,201 to $1,600</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $1,601</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median</strong></td>
<td><strong>$700</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,400</strong></td>
<td><strong>$500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Occupational hazards

- High incidence of workplace injury
  - 19% reported suffering an injury requiring medical attention in past year.
  - More than half of those who were injured in the past year did not receive medical care.
  - More than two-thirds of injured day laborers have lost time from work.

- 73% of day laborers believe their work is dangerous.
Labor standards

- Wage and hour violations
  - Nonpayment of wages (49%)
  - Underpayment of wages (48%)
  - Worked extra hours (32%)

- Workplace abuses
  - Denied food, water or breaks (44%)
  - Insulted (28%)
  - Abandoned at worksite (27%)
DAY LABOR PICK-UP PROHIBITED TRESPASS STATUTE #13-1502-A1