



Community Development Project Legal Help for Community Organizations and Worker Cooperatives

The Community Development Project of the Urban Justice Center strengthens the impact of grassroots organizations in New York's low-income and other excluded communities. We achieve this through legal, technical, research and policy assistance in support of their work towards social justice. We partner with community organizations working on such issues as fair housing and anti-displacement, workers' rights, consumer justice, economic development, civic participation, access to affordable health care and environmental justice.

Our attorneys offer free legal advice and assistance to grassroots organizations in a variety of areas, including incorporation and tax exemption, complying with non-profit, employment and tax laws, and real estate and lease issues. We also help groups of workers establish worker-owned cooperative businesses.

A list of the transactional services that we offer is included below.

Assistance Provided

Legal

- √ Incorporating as a not-for-profit corporation in New York State
- √ Drafting corporate governance documents (bylaws, employee manuals, operating agreements, etc.)
- √ Applying for 501(c)(3) status with the IRS (tax exemption)
- √ Assistance with forming worker cooperatives and community-focused businesses
- √ Help with leases and other real estate issues
- √ Reviewing contracts and other legal documents
- √ Land use and property zoning issues
- √ Assistance with annual filing requirements for charitable organizations
- √ Drafting and updating personnel policies
- √ Assistance with employment issues

To speak to one of our attorneys please contact:

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Worker Cooperative Development

- "More Low-Wage Workers Become Their Own Bosses," *Gotham Gazette*, November 17, 2011. Within four years, Sí Se Puede's worker-owners, many of whom did not speak fluent English, tripled their wages to as much as \$25-an-hour. Last year's open house to recruit new members drew over 90 applications for 13 spots. The company, now with 37 worker-owners, has grossed \$1.6 million.
- "From a Brooklyn Street Corner, a Women's Cleaning Cooperative Grows," *New York Times*, October 12, 2011. Last November, the Bucio sisters founded the Apple Eco-Friendly Cleaning cooperative with a handful of women whom they met at the Williamsburg hiring site. The group advertises on recycled paper and makes its own cleaning products, forgoing harsh chemicals for ingredients like lemon juice, glycerin, borax and fruit oils.
- "Cleaning Up," *Independent*, September 18, 2009. In addition to receiving equal pay and being able to set their own schedules, cooperative members vote on all organizational decisions. The cooperative is supported by the Center for Family Life, a social service organization based in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, which provides administrative support and meeting space.

Small Business Preservation & Advocacy

- "Small businesses at Willets Point demand to be moved en masse," *New York Daily News*, September 23, 2009. A group of workers and local advocates rallied at Willets Point on Tuesday to demand the city come forward with a relocation plan for small businesses in the area.