



Democracy at Work
Institute US FEDERATION OF
WORKER COOPERATIVES

Immigrant Worker Cooperatives in the US

Homecare Cooperative Conference

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Introduction

The Democracy at Work Institute (DAWI) expands democratic business ownership to people locked out of good jobs and ownership opportunities, particularly low-wage workers, immigrants and communities of color.



Vanessa Bransburg

Senior Managing Director & RRC Lead

vbransburg@institute.coop

Introduction

Context

Rapid Response Cooperative Development

Connect

Industries

Bookkeeping

Handywork

Food

Child & elder care

Pet care

Cleaning

Landscaping

Manufacturing

Retail – clothing

Arts & media

Translation

Tutoring

Context: Immigrant-led worker cooperatives



Damayan
Cleaning
Cooperative



a
bookkeeping
cooperative



CARITAS
FELICES



Challenges

1. Immigrant-led coops are isolated
2. Development efforts are under-resourced
3. Legal form and scaling
4. Similar business types but no cohesion

Work authorization is a barrier to employment for highly-skilled and qualified workers.

- Can't be an employee
- Challenges for independent contractors
- Fellowships end



Rapid Response Cooperative Development



The cooperative serves as a legal buffer between workers and clients. This type of affiliation makes a working relationship possible while protecting workers.

Rapid Response Cooperative Development



A mission-oriented professional staffing agency



Rapid Response Cooperative Development



It's a business structured as an LLC



It has shared ownership; members are highly autonomous



It operates according to a set of principles



Members invest in the business



1 member, 1 vote decision-making in governance



Structure: a member-administrator handles back-office management

Rapid Response Cooperative Development



- Interpretation/translation
- Bookkeeping and financial management
- Graphic design
- Web development
- COVID Contact Tracing
- Community outreach & education
- IT and database support
- Grant writing and reporting
- Training curriculum development
- Communications
- Paralegal services

Rapid Response Cooperative Development

1

This is a mission-aligned partnership designed to meet multiple needs with integrity.



2

Client contracts with and pays the business, and works directly with owners.



3

Members are compensated as owners, not employees or contractors.



4

Cooperative handles billing, payment, bookkeeping, tax filing, member support.





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415-379-9201, ext 13