



MEETING THE NEEDS OF WORKERS NOW

***A \$2 Million Campaign
for Worker-Centered Innovation***

May 2022

Leveraging a generous \$1M match from Marguerite Casey Foundation, The Workers Lab is launching a fundraising campaign for the month of May to raise an additional \$2M to invest in workers, innovation, and new ideas.

THE CONTEXT

From our country's founding, a large number of workers – often on the basis of race, ethnicity, or nationality – were intentionally left out of labor protections and public benefits programs. In the policy gains of the 20th century, we exacerbated inequities to advance some workers forward, while others were left behind.

Today, many workers still remain excluded from the rights, benefits, and protections afforded by major labor laws and policies in the United States. This spans everyone from gig workers to agricultural workers, domestic workers to migrant workers, and most directly impacts people of color, people with disabilities, and queer people.

At The Workers Lab, our purpose is to give new ideas for and with workers a chance to succeed. Innovation can and should be used to correct injustices, particularly in our aim to address racial justice. We view innovation as a tool to tackle the most pressing challenges of our day, while also righting the wrongs of the 20th century.

There is an urgent need and tremendous opportunity at this moment for sustained, strategic investments in worker-leaders and worker-centered innovation.

OUR BACKGROUND

Worker-centered innovation is how we approach our work. It is in our DNA. The Workers Lab is a majority person of color, queer, and first-generation team. Our investment strategy and programs reflect the internal team we have assembled and the external partners we bring to the table. Informed by our own lived experiences, backgrounds, and histories of work, our team creates thoughtful, effective, and impactful programs with workers at the center.

It is thanks to our team that we have built such a strong track record as the go-to place for people of color, worker-centered innovation.

We have the experience, expertise, and most significantly, the trust to engage and work with workers from diverse communities, industries, and backgrounds. Since our founding, we have invested over \$11M in nearly 100 worker-centered innovations.

Our work is executed through three core strategies:

Invest:

We invest in new ideas and solutions to intractable problems through our Innovation Fund and Design Sprint for Social Change.

Learn:

We learn about how new ideas transform systems and structures to better serve every kind of worker in this country.

Inform:

We inform people with power about these new ideas to encourage adoption, replication, and new financial investments.

CAMPAIGN GOALS

1. Raise \$2M for new ideas that enable workers to be the primary drivers of economic, social, and political transformation.

This funding will unlock a \$1M match from the Marguerite Casey Foundation. Together, this funding will support the core programs of The Workers Lab, including our investments in emerging entrepreneurs and worker-leaders, along with our in-house experiments, worker research projects, and on-the-ground pilots.

2. Bring together a diverse group of donors, funders, and supporters to provide flexible funding for worker innovations.

Throughout this month-long campaign, we are seeking to mobilize our network of supporters, from private foundations to corporate partners, from investors to grassroots donors. As a lab, our organization recognizes and values bringing together a cross-section of funders, partners, and donors.

3. Build momentum across our communication channels to highlight emerging worker-leaders and innovation.

In the month of May, The Workers Lab aims to amplify both the needs and opportunities for greater investment in worker-centered innovations. We will highlight our innovators and spotlight their ongoing work. We are calling on all our current partners to share and cross-promote our campaign.

The Workers Lab envisions a society where all workers are safe, healthy, and secure.

OUR 2022 INITIATIVES

INNOVATION FUND

Building the Pipeline for Worker Entrepreneurs of Color

For entrepreneurs of color, there are persistent barriers to both the financial and social capital needed for their businesses, innovations, and ideas. In the coming months, we will launch a national open call for innovators or worker-leaders of color, with an emphasis on women, who have an idea to transform the lives of workers and demonstrate potential for capital investment to scale. Our finalists will then have the opportunity to pitch their ideas at our Innovation Fund Showcase before an audience of investors, funders, and other worker advocates. We aim to develop a pipeline for entrepreneurs of color and to provide interested investors the opportunity to access these emerging entrepreneurs and their businesses, innovations, and ideas.

DESIGN SPRINT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Testing a New Worker Innovation on Quality, Flexible Work

We are launching a new Design Sprint to develop, pilot, and evaluate an innovative flexible work platform. This online platform works by matching people to local work that aligns with their skills, aspirations, and times of availability. Unlike typical “gig work” platforms, this one is built around protections, control, and ongoing relationships with workers. Based on the initial success of this workforce platform in Long Beach, CA, we will now further develop and test the technology at scale across several sectors and industries in up to five cities or local municipalities. Our project aims to demonstrate a replicable, scalable platform for flexible work that can then be used in other cities.

WORKER RESEARCH AND LEARNINGS

Building A Knowledge Bank On Workers For The Field

The Workers Lab is committed to investing and learning more about gig, contract, and nonstandard workers, and their challenges and their needs. Earlier this year we launched the Gig Worker Learning Project, a year-long national research and learning project in partnership with the Aspen Institute Future of Work Initiative, to provide data on gig workers and the nonstandard workforce. The Workers Lab is well-positioned to conduct this effort with workers, while bringing together a cross-section of leaders from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to ensure buy-in and future use of the research findings. Our expectation is to deliver a national data set about gig workers that people in power can use to make better and more informed decisions about workers in this section of our economy.

HELP US INVEST IN WORKERS

As we emerge from the pandemic, it is apparent that many of our long-standing systems and structures to support working people are ill-equipped and broken. To respond to those challenges – along with the compounding racial and economic inequities confronting workers, their families, and their communities – The Workers Lab has identified key investment strategies and interventions around entrepreneurship, innovation, and worker research efforts.

We cannot do this work without the increased support and generosity of our individual donors, foundations, grassroots supporters, and corporate partners.

In order to carry out our vision and execute these strategies for and with workers, we need to raise \$2M in the month of May. Thanks to a \$1M match from the Marguerite Casey Foundation, we are starting this campaign with momentum. With your support, we have confidence we will meet and surpass our goal. Help us make this campaign a success by giving today!

To Donate Online:

theworkerslab.com/donate

To Contribute by Check:

**“The Workers Lab”
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Oakland, CA 94607**

***Join us in this campaign today!
And together we can make needed investments
in workers and new ideas***

With additional questions or to learn more about how to support this campaign, please contact Eddy Morales at (202) 459-8687 or eddy@theworkerslab.com