

STREET VENDOR PROJECT

Street Vendor Project (SVP) envisions a New York City where street vendors thrive as essential entrepreneurs and anchors of community and culture in the five boroughs.

MISSION

The Street Vendor Project (SVP) is a membership-based organization that champions the rights of street vendors as small businesses to earn a living and contribute to the culture and life of New York City. SVP, founded in 2001, celebrates the long tradition of street vending in New York City and the diversity of cultures and backgrounds from which vendors come, noting that an estimated 95% of the approximately 20,000 street vendors are immigrants who operate at the margins of the formal economy.

Through direct legal representation, small business development and training, organizing support, leadership development, and strategic legislative advocacy, SVP builds power and community among vendors. Language access is extremely important for our organization to deliver effective services, and as such we hold capacity in the five most common languages spoken within the vending community: Arabic, Bengali, Mandarin, Spanish, and English. SVP is part of the Urban Justice Center, a non-profit organization that provides legal representation and advocacy to various marginalized groups of New Yorkers.

OUR MEMBERS

SVP staff and leadership have a strong record of ensuring its meetings and collective arenas are safe spaces for cross-cultural dialogue that practice language and gender justice. We have a Leadership Board of 15 street vendor members who are democratically elected each year by the general membership, and who work together with staff to develop and implements our campaigns and organizational direction.

Our membership base of over 2,200 vendors is incredible diverse, and core part of our organization is to unite vendors across race, gender, language, and cultural backgrounds. We organize in the primary languages spoken by our members: Arabic, Bangla, Mandarin, Spanish, and English, with the goal of expanding to Wolof.



HISTORIC SUCCESS

SVP has a deep history of collectively organizing with our members for strategic legislative change. In 2021, SVP won a historic campaign to reform the vending system for the first time in almost 40 years, lifting the cap on street permits and creating a civilian oversight agency.

As part of the Fund Excluded Workers Steering Committee, SVP members led a hard-hitting campaign to create the Excluded Workers Fund, a \$2.1 Billion fund for New Yorkers across the state excluded from relief due to the nature of their work or immigration status.

SERVICES

Environmental Justice Program: SVP's previous campaigns have focused primarily on economic and legal justice for vendors – priority issues for our members. But vendor leaders have increasingly recognized the need to make their businesses healthier (for workers, consumers, and the general public), more sustainable, and more resilient to the impacts of climate change. We are seeking to launch an ambitious new program with the goal of transforming New York's food carts to a green and resilient industry.

Female Leadership Development: We center female leaders within the street vending community to brainstorm, design, and organize meetings, events and activities as part of our Women's Committee. This committee supports female vendor leadership growth while creating a space where women can connect, destress, and share tactics on how to stay safe in the workplace.

Small Business Consultation Program: SVP's Small Business Consultation Program provides our members with the tools, resources, and skills needed to grow their business via individual consultations tailored to needs specific to the street vendor community. Consultations cover topics including business compliance, financial literacy, e-payments, social media, personal finance management, and marketing.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

- Supported 2,300 vendors with cash assistance ranging from \$300-\$1,000
- Launched our Vendor-Powered Food Distribution Program, distributing 30,000+ culturally relevant meals made by street vendors to food insecure New Yorkers while providing vendors an income
- Connected over 3,000 vendors to housing, food, and mental health resources
- Distributed 7,000 masks and created multilingual COVID-safe business operating guidelines for vendors
- Provided over 400 vendors with legal services and small business consultations

