



Legacy Business Registry

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2020-21-041
Business Name: Rainbow Grocery Cooperative Inc.
Business Address: 1745 Folsom Street
District: District 9
Applicant: [REDACTED], Board of Directors
Nomination Letter Date: April 5, 2021
Nominated By: Supervisor Hillary Ronen

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

☒ Yes ☐ No

3159 16th Street from 1975 to 1983 (8 years)
1899 Mission Street from 1983 to 1996 (13 years)
1745 Folsom Street from 1996 to Present (25 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

☒ Yes ☐ No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

☒ Yes ☐ No

NOTES: N/A

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: April 21, 2021

Richard Kurylo
Program Manager, Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program

Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
legacybusiness@sfgov.org
www.legacybusiness.org



Member, Board of Supervisors
District 9



City and County of San Francisco

HILLARY RONEN

April 5, 2021

Richard Kurylo, Legacy Business Program Manager
Legacy Business Program, San Francisco Office of Small Business

Dear Mr. Kurylo:

I am writing a Letter of Nomination in support of Rainbow Grocery joining the City's Legacy Business Program. In addition to meeting the requirements necessary to become a Legacy Business, Rainbow Grocery has a unique and vibrant history with deep roots in San Francisco's Mission District.

The Rainbow Grocery cooperative opened its store in the Mission District in 1975. For more than 45 years, Rainbow Grocery has been serving the surrounding Mission community and the Bay Area as a whole by offering a wide selection of affordable, organic, and locally sourced vegetarian food products that have minimal negative impacts both socially and ecologically.

In 1996, Rainbow Grocery moved to its current location at 13th and Folsom Street, where it has grown tremendously, more than doubling its workforce to over 250 employees. Many of its employees have worked with the store for several decades, demonstrating the strong, affirming, and worker-centered community it has built over generations of serving the residents of San Francisco.

As an independent grocery store and a worker-owned cooperative, the same employees who stock products and ring up customers' groceries are the owners and decision-makers for the business. Rainbow Grocery's worker-owners uphold a common desire to work in a fair, inclusive, and democratic workplace where everyone's opinion matters.

Rainbow Grocery's successful business model for cooperative work not only makes a difference by providing healthy food and organic products bought from local organic farmers and vendors, but it also serves as a model for how to put the ideals of sustainable living into practice by offering resources, education, and information to local schools and organizations about health and sustainability in the foods we eat.

Rainbow Grocery is, and has always been, a community serving business. It has served the residents of the Mission and of San Francisco for decades, and I am thrilled to have this establishment in my district. I strongly support their application to be declared a Legacy Business and it is my honor to submit this nomination on their behalf.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Hillary Ronen".

Supervisor Hillary Ronen, San Francisco Board of Supervisors

Section One:

Business / Applicant Information.

Please provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

NAME OF BUSINESS:	
Rainbow Grocery Cooperative Inc.	
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business):	
All workers have equal ownership stake.	
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE NUMBER:
1745 Folsom Street San Francisco, CA 94103	(415)863-0620
	EMAIL ADDRESS:
	general@rainbow.coop
MAILING ADDRESS – STREET ADDRESS:	MAILING ADDRESS – CITY AND STATE:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Same as Business Address	
	MAILING ADDRESS – ZIP CODE:
WEBSITE ADDRESS:	
https://rainbow.coop/	
FACEBOOK PAGE:	
https://www.facebook.com/RainbowGrocery/	
TWITTER NAME:	
@Rainbow_Grocery	
APPLICANT'S NAME:	APPLICANT'S TELEPHONE NUMBER:
	(415)863-0620
APPLICANT'S TITLE:	APPLICANT'S EMAIL ADDRESS:
Board of Directors	
SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:	
SF City & County Business License # 090813	
SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (If applicable):	
California Corp # 240-7257-1	

Section Two:

Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS	ZIP CODE	START DATE OF BUSINESS
3159 16th Street, San Francisco CA	94103	August 10 1975
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	8/10/75 - 9/30/83	

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
1899 Mission Street	94103	Start: October 1, 1983 End: April 24, 1996

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
1745 Folsom Street	94103	Start: April 25, 1996 End: ongoing

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

Section Three:

Disclosure Statement.

San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified. A business deemed not current with all San Francisco taxes, business registration and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for grants through the Legacy Business Program.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- ☒ I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- ☒ I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- ☒ I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- ☒ I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- ☒ I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- ☒ I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- ☒ I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:

RAINBOW GROCERY

Section 4: Written Historical Narrative

CRITERION 1

a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.

Rainbow Grocery ("Rainbow"), currently located at 1745 Folsom Street, was established in August of 1975.

Rainbow Grocery opened at 3159 16th Street as a collaboration of the People's Food System (political group) and an Ashram on Haight Street (spiritual group). This location had been boarded up and was surrounded by other boarded up storefronts, and was chosen in part because there was no real grocery option in the area at that time.

The People's Food System, a network of worker-owned cooperative stores and businesses, was established in the 1970s by food activists. Campaigns to improve nutrition and to understand better the politics of international food industries, as well as the politics of various food choices, helped seed consumer demand for healthier and more organic alternatives, later widely adopted by mainstream grocery stores and restaurants.

Rainbow Grocery has been a collective effort since its inception, and ownership has always been shared among the workers, starting with a core crew of about 20 volunteers and growing to over 225 worker-owners today.

Less than a year after originally opening the grocery store, the owners wanted to offer more product lines, so they opened Rainbow General Store two doors down.

In October of 1983, Rainbow Grocery moved locations to 1899 Mission Street, where the store was able to have both their grocery and general stores under one roof though still operating in separate spaces.

In April of 1996, Rainbow Grocery rented, and eventually purchased, 1745 Folsom Street from the Archdiocese of San Francisco where the store still resides, now as one fully-integrated shopping experience.

b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?

Rainbow Grocery has not ceased operations for any significant amount of time since it opened in 1975.

c. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.

Rainbow Grocery is a worker-owned cooperative.

d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.

Rainbow Grocery has a policy that anyone they hire is expected to be working towards full membership/ownership, so that their entire workforce are owners cooperatively. They do still have some of the founding members who originated from both the People's Food System and the Ashram in their cooperative. When a worker owner leaves the cooperative, Rainbow Grocery pays out their shares in the business, and they are no longer a member/owner.

e. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years, the applicant will need to provide documentation of the existence of the business prior to current ownership to verify it has been in operation for 30+ years. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Documentation of the existence of the business verifying it has been in operation for 30+ years is provided in this Legacy Business Registry application. Rainbow Grocery has worker-owners who have been with the company since the very beginning in 1975.

f. Note any other special features of the business location, such as, if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.

The historic resource status of the building at 1745 Folsom Street is classified by the Planning Department as Category C, No Historic Resource Present / Not Age Eligible, with regard to the California Environmental Quality Act. The industrial building was constructed in 1940, and was found ineligible for the National Register, California Register, or local designation through survey evaluation.

CRITERION 2

a. Describe the business's contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community or San Francisco.

Rainbow Grocery Cooperative was one of the original "natural foods" stores in the country, born out of a defining era in San Francisco in which the city's global reputation for progressive

politics, and both personal and social health, is rooted. Rainbow Grocery is a bastion that perfectly symbolizes that renowned era.

Rainbow was an early supporter of the California Certified Organic Farmers, a regulatory agency that regulated a farm's organic growing claim. The store labeled their products with C.C.O.F. certification in order to keep consumers informed of when there were pesticides in products.

Rainbow Grocery was an early provider of health insurance to workers at no cost, as long as employees worked 25 hours a week, before the State of California required it. Rainbow was also the first grocer to work with the San Francisco Health Department 25 years ago to attend health fairs aimed at addressing health conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease. The first Health Fair Rainbow Grocery attended was at Maxine Hall in the Western Addition. Rainbow Grocery continued to provide education, fresh produce, and support to families regarding how to eat a diet to prevent these conditions, attending every Health Fair that the business was invited to, no matter how big or small.

Rainbow provided public bathrooms at a great cost in labor, with changing tables.

The store offered bulk food to fit all budgets, large and small.

Rainbow Grocery designed the first connected scale to the cash register with a Hobart Point of Sale system in order to sell bulk food. Every grocery now has connected scales. Before Rainbow Grocery designed it, there were none.

Rainbow Grocery sold no meat. They are one of the only food stores in the United States that does not sell meat for human consumption.

Rainbow raised the bar in quality of life. Rainbow's goals were health driven, not profit driven, which made the store a running joke in the industry – until Rainbow Grocery became the rule not the exception. The store's profitability has inspired much competition, resulting in many more businesses selling organic, and healthy food options. Rainbow Grocery's goal continues to be highest quality at lowest cost. Health is their only wealth.

Rainbow Grocery was the first to provide consumers with the option of not using a paper or plastic bag, paying consumers when they chose the option of using boxes that the store provided in a box corral, or when they provided their own bags. Rainbow was the first to institute a recycling program within the worker and consumer space in the store.

With every successive location, Rainbow Grocery increased property values and consumer foot traffic. The current location had public transportation Monday through Friday until 6:00 p.m., and there was no service on weekends. Rainbow's consumers helped change that to 24/7 service.

Rainbow Grocery has been a venue for healthy food vendors to become growing businesses, including Amy's, Clover, Nancy's Yogurt, Viccolo, and GT Kombucha to name a small few that started at Rainbow and continue to thrive.

San Francisco is currently saturated with stores like Rainbow Grocery. That was their original goal – to be able to buy an onion on every corner. People could buy cigarettes or beer everywhere, and find a church on every street, but they could not easily find real food to feed a family. Rainbow Grocery changed that dynamic.

b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?

Rainbow Grocery worked with the Black Panthers to provide healthy food for their free lunch program.

Long before the Dyke March was a city sanctioned event, Rainbow Grocery workers would drive a flatbed truck in the event and hand out water and oranges to the marchers.

During the HIV/AIDS crisis, locals and local researchers relied heavily on Rainbow Grocery's extensive and unparalleled supplements department to try to find opportunities for effective treatment; and Rainbow witnessed their discovery of a connection to proteins via the products they began to request and offer testimonials about. This was the discovery that led to the creation of the AZT cocktail that turned the tide of an HIV diagnosis from a death sentence to a livable reality.

During the Loma Prieta Earthquake, Rainbow's workers handed out water and all their perishable foods to the neighborhood.

As a part of Mayor Willie Brown's urban reinvestment program, Rainbow Grocery was the recipient of the then-largest small business loan to date. This allowed the store to purchase the building from the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

Rainbow Grocery is the largest worker-owned retail cooperative in the United States, and as such they provide both financial and intellectual assistance and serve as a model to other co-ops, local and otherwise.

It is especially noteworthy that a couple of Rainbow's long-time produce buyers began talking to local farmers starting in the 1970s, selling them on the concept of "organic" growing techniques. Not only did this allow for what would become an amazing assortment of local organic produce and far less pollution and health ramifications for the farmers and their workers, but it created a sustainable economy by which small, family-owned farms were able to stay relevant and avoid being subsumed by corporate monocropping. The local farmers went on to assist in the creation of "certified" organic standards, impacting not only the local area but the entire industries of agriculture and grocery.

c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?

Rainbow Grocery is heavily referenced in the books *Other Avenues Are Possible* by Shanta Nimbark Sacharoff and *Cheesemonger; A Life On The Wedge* by Gordon Edgar. While Rainbow Grocery has no idea in how many other publications they've been referenced in over the years, they know that there are books and trade materials in Australia, Japan, and beyond, that reference the store. Rainbow Grocery regularly host tours for international business groups who are curious about the store's business model and philosophies.

Rainbow Grocery has also been covered by the media, including 7x7 Bay Area, Eater San Francisco, Hoodline, Mission Local, San Francisco Bay Times, San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Examiner, SFist, Thrillist, ABC7 News, KRON, KTVU, and more.

d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?

No significant or historical people are associated with the business.

e. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?

Commitment to the community is the very reason Rainbow Grocery opened for business, and did so in a community that was being underserved with groceries. To ensure the store stays focused on their mission of providing good jobs and healthy food to their community, Rainbow has a store policy that they donate 2% of their annual profits back into the community, and they have a Donations and Grants Committee to direct those funds according to the store's values. Rainbow Grocery offers seed money in the form of grants to assist new worker-owned cooperatives in forming or thriving. They annually donate as much as 4.5% of their profits to community organizations and food to almost most any organization who requests it. They also have a long history of showing up to various community events, ranging from protests to street parties, with healthy snacks and water. They also participate in skill shares and other collaborations with other worker-owned cooperatives both local and nationwide as a commitment to their cooperative community.

f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.

As the largest natural foods store in the city, Rainbow Grocery truly serves anybody and everybody in San Francisco. They are also unique in being the only all vegetarian store, so they are a popular destination for vegetarian, vegan, and plant-based communities in particular. Rainbow's membership includes higher than average numbers of queer, trans, and immigrant folks, so as such the store has an inherent interest in serving those communities.

g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/object/interior?

Not applicable.

h. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?

If Rainbow Grocery were to close, access to their vast assortment of foods would be the most obvious impact to the immediate community. Other stores in the area are either niche with small assortments or focus primarily on conventional selections. If Rainbow closed, 225 workers would lose their income, health insurance, etc., many of whom still live in the surrounding community or greater city.

CRITERION 3

a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.

Rainbow Grocery is one of the nation's oldest natural foods stores, and it is one of the last two worker-owned cooperative groceries in San Francisco. Additionally, Rainbow is the nation's largest retail worker-owned cooperative. The cooperative is democratically run by the workers, who solely comprise their membership. Rainbow has no hierarchies and no management structure. All their decisions are made either by their membership or in committees that have been elected by membership. Each worker-owner equals one vote, whether they're a new member or one of the founding members.

Since Rainbow Grocery has deep roots with a local Ashram whose members believed in keeping a vegetarian lifestyle, Rainbow honors that tradition by remaining a vegetarian grocery store today.

Idealistic must be a word used when describing the business. Rainbow Grocery is a worker-owned cooperative because they believe it the most ideal form of capitalism. Rainbow has policies against GMO foods/ingredients because they want scientific proof that they won't harm the environment or our bodies before they will sell it. Rainbow only sells organic produce because they believe it to be the healthiest option not only for the consumer but also for the farmers and farm workers. Rainbow gives away large portions of money to entities they believe help to create a better community. Rainbow Grocery is often the first retailer of local products because they believe in keeping money local and supporting local industries. Rainbow also provides themselves with unparalleled health insurance because they think it's the right thing to do.

Stated another way, Rainbow Grocery is an earnest, well-intentioned, idealistic-inclined, San Francisco community-based, vegetarian, natural foods, worker-owned retail cooperative grocery store.

b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to

retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)

Rainbow Grocery's tradition of being a worker-owned cooperative is built into the fabric of the store. Rainbow has bylaws and policies to help keep them aligned with this concept and to protect their structure from possible interference. They also have a mission statement to help the store hold their values of "right work."

Similarly, Rainbow Grocery is committed to natural foods, as they believe them to be the best option for our bodies, the bodies of the farm workers, and the environment. Rainbow's attachment to this concept is also a part of their origins and mission statement.

c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).

Rainbow Grocery's current and now forever location at 1745 Folsom Street is an old industrial building with the once-ubiquitous bow-arch timber ceilings of the era that heavily comprised the architecture of this formerly predominantly industrial zone.

d. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years; the applicant will need to provide documentation that demonstrates the current owner has maintained the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Documentation that demonstrates the business has been a grocery store for 30+ years is included in this Legacy Business Registry application.

State of California The Resources Agency
Department of Parks and Recreation
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code _____

Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 2 *Resource name(s) or number (assigned by recorder) 1745 Folsom Street

P1. Other Identifier Rainbow Market (present), Mack Motor Truck (historic)

*P2. Location: ☐ Not for Publication ☒ Unrestricted

*a. County: San Francisco and P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad: SF North Date: 1994

*c. Address: 1745 - Folsom St City: San Francisco Zip: 94103

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone _____; _____mE/ _____mN

e. Other Locational Data: Assessor's Parcel Number: 3529050

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

1745 Folsom Street is a one-story, reinforced-concrete industrial building finished in stucco and capped by a bowstring truss roof. It is now used as a grocery store. The utilitarian building occupies a 45,000 sq. ft. lot with frontage on Folsom, 13th, and Trainor streets. Its three main sections form an L plan, while a small loading dock addition on the south side makes an overall F plan. The roof consists of five bow truss sections. The Folsom Street facade is the primary facade and it faces west. It has six symmetrical bays at the north end, the first containing a glazed aluminum pedestrian entrance with automatic sliding doors. The next four bays each contain aluminum display windows, and the sixth bay is blind. At the south end of this elevation are transom windows with fixed glazing. The 13th Street elevation contains a vehicular entrance and an exit to a parking garage, as well as another supermarket type sliding door pedestrian entrance. The Trainor Street elevation has a central vehicular entrance enclosed within a metal gate, with irregular blind window openings on either side. At the southeast corner of the building is a small loading dock. The heavily altered building appears to be in good condition.

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (list attributes and codes) HP8. Industrial Building

P4. Resources Present: ☒ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐ Element of District ☐ Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5a. Photograph or Drawing (Photograph required for buildings, structures, and objects)



*P5b. Photo (view, date, accession #
100_6470.JPG, 11/29/2007,
view to SE

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources
☒ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
1940, Assessor's Office

*P7. Owner and Address:
Rainbow Grocery Cooperative
1745 Folsom St
San Francisco Ca 94103

*P8. Recorded by
Tim Kelley
Tim Kelley Consulting
2912 Diamond St. #330

*P9. Date Recorded:
6/12/08

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)
Intensive

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none") San Francisco Office of the Assessor/Recorder

*Attachments ☐ BSOR ☐ None ☒ Continuation Sheet
☐ Archaeological Record ☐ District Record ☐ Location Map ☐ Other...
☐ Artifact Record ☐ Photograph Record ☐ Linear Feature Record

CONTINUATION SHEET

Page of

Resource Name or # (Assigned by Recorder) 1745 Folsom Street

*Recorded by: Tim Kelley

Date 6/12/08

☒ Continuation ☐ Update



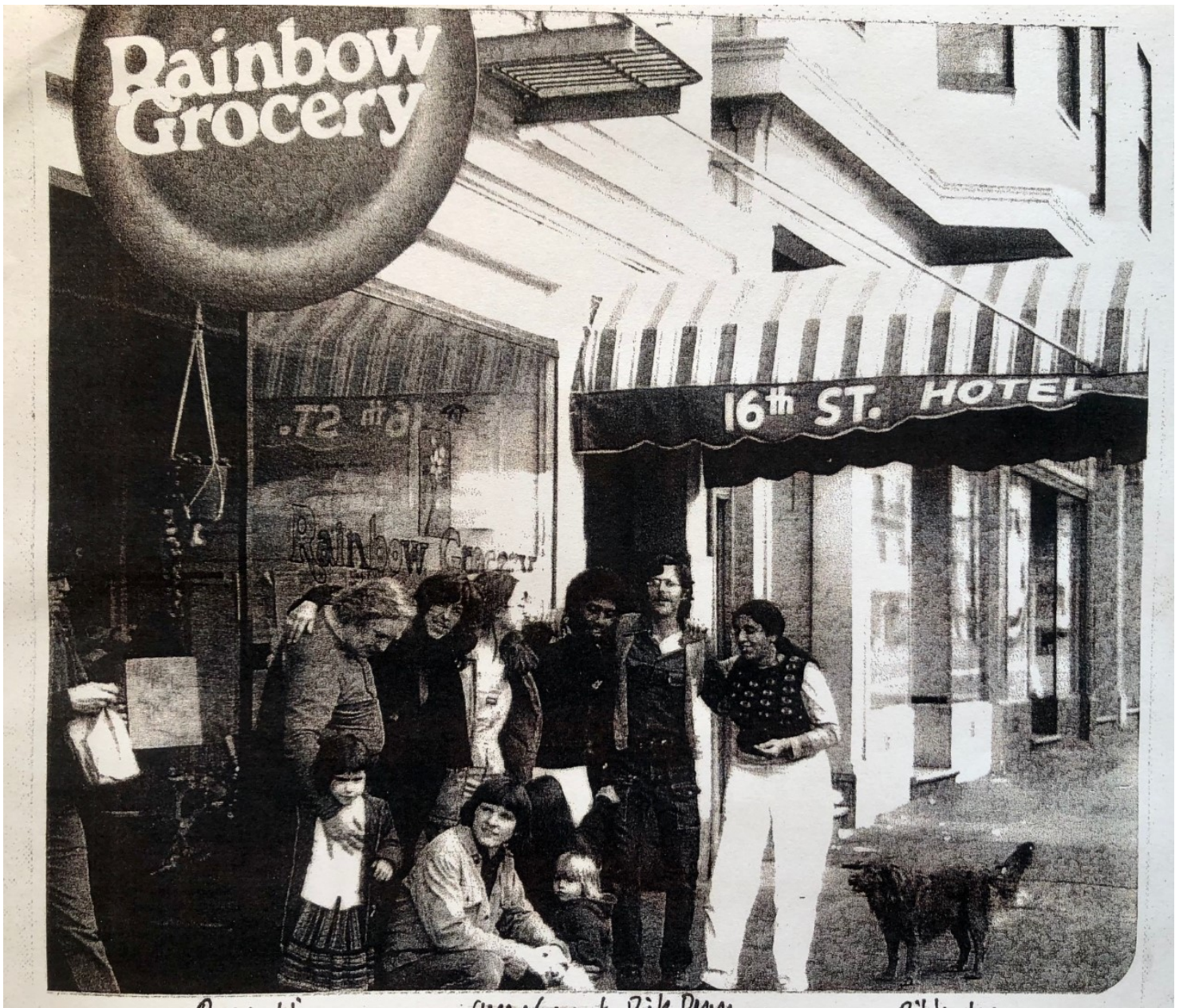
100_6473.JPG, 11/29/07, view to SE



100_6477.JPG, 11/29/07, view to W



100_6479.JPG, 11/29/07, view to W, loading dock



Rainbow workers, some of their kids, and one of their dogs, outside our original storefront at 3159 16th St. Est '76



Left: Some original Rainbow workers. Right: An early worker at 16th St, who is still a worker with us today.



It is a long-standing Rainbow tradition, if we can find a spare inch, we'll put product in it to sell.



Workers capturing a final moment in front of our 15th St location. Note the sign to the right on the building.



The little billboard near our main entrance at our final location, 1745 Folsom St.



Old school technology to get full shots of our 1745 Folsom location from the Folsom St side (top), and the 13th St side (bottom).

Current Rainbow Store Photos



Panoramic exterior full store shot, 13th St, under 101 over-pass.



Main painted sign, above garage entrance/exits, on 13th St.

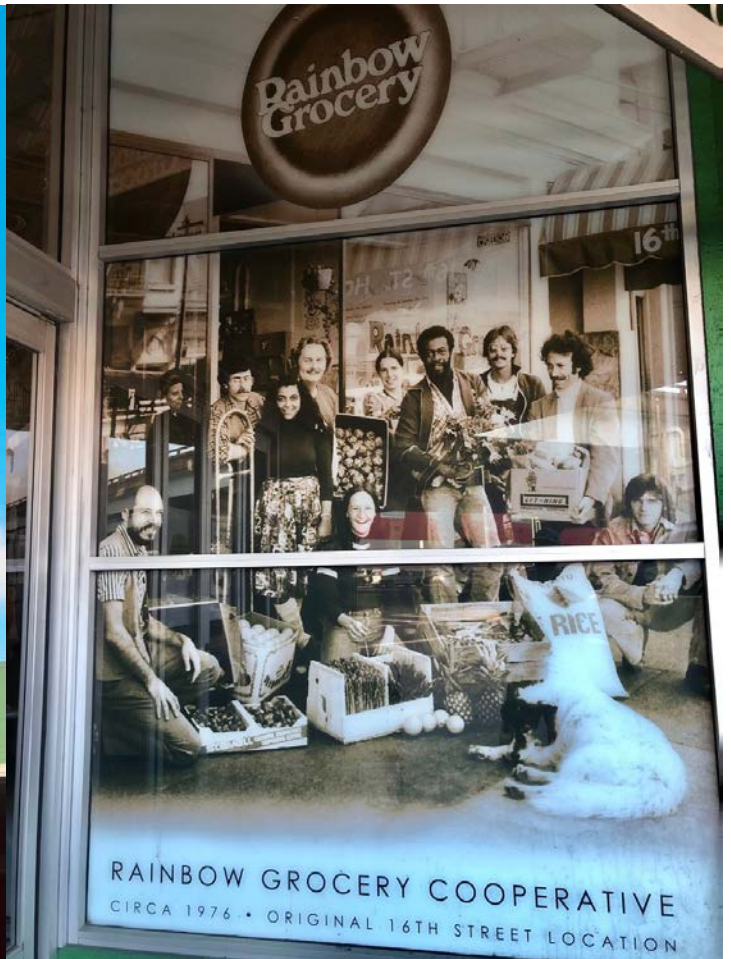


Full store exterior on Folsom St.

Shots of all exterior signage



Left: Main entrance on 13th St. Right: Sign painted on wall on Folsom St.



Left: Freeway sign, located in our back parking lot. Right: Old picture in window at Folsom St entrance.



Left: Awning over Folsom St entrance. Right: Awning over produce receiving roll up door.



Original store sign, now hanging inside our Folsom St entrance.



Freeway sign, located in our back parking lot.

Current interior store shots



Rainbow colored cash registers, last redone in 2014.



Current picture of housewares corner.



Current interior store picture.

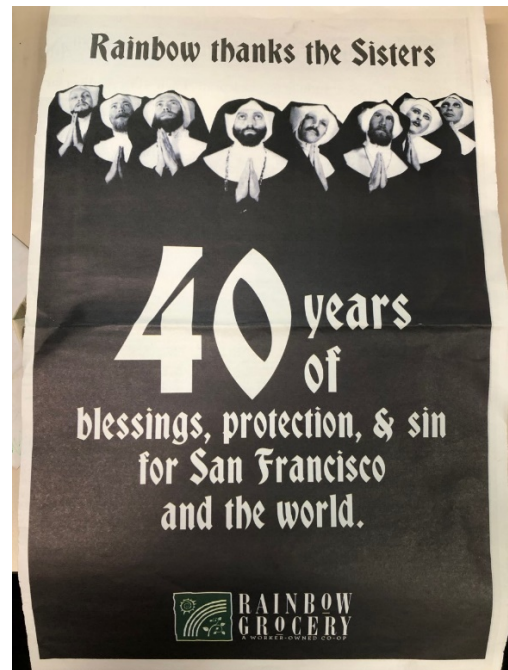


Current produce section.

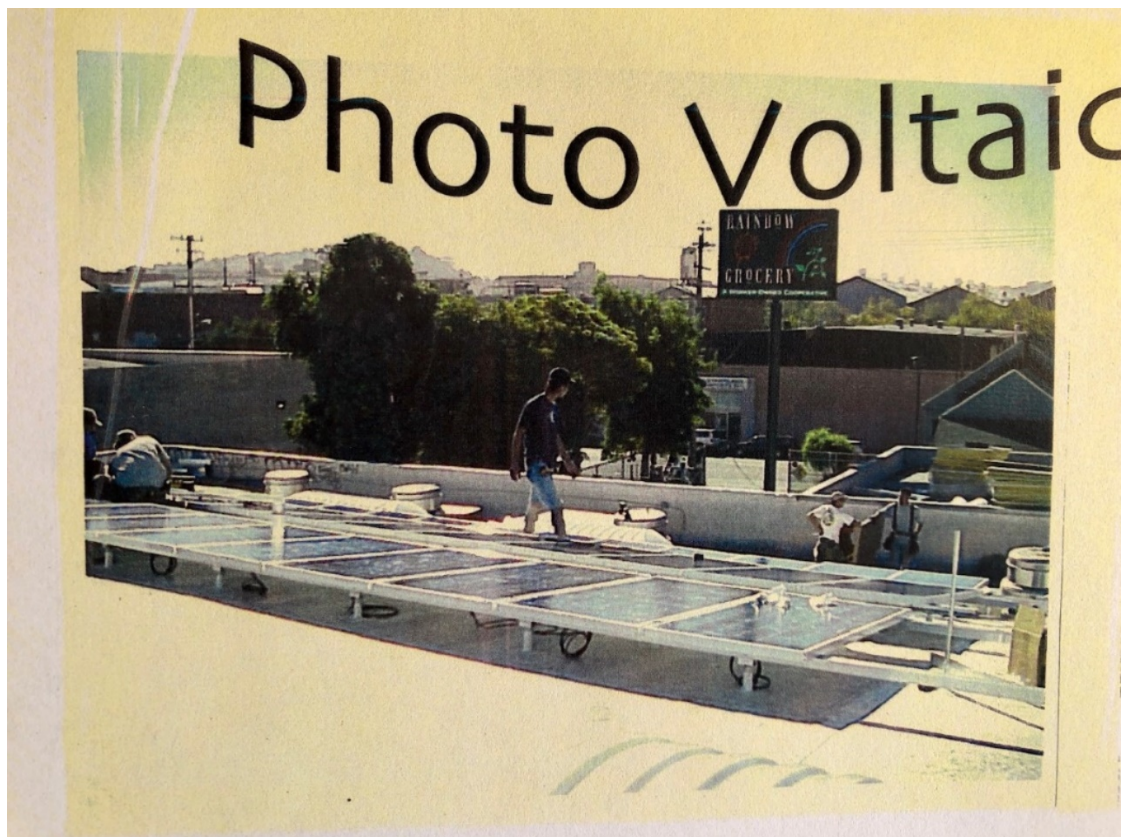
Miscellaneous Historic Photos



Then Mayor Willie Brown in our Bulk section for a press conference where he presented our store with what was then the largest loan from the city to an independent small business; this loan allowed us the opportunity to purchase our building (1745 Folsom St), which is how we have been able to remain in business still today.



Left: An old water-decal from our days on 15th St. Right: An ad we ran celebrating the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.



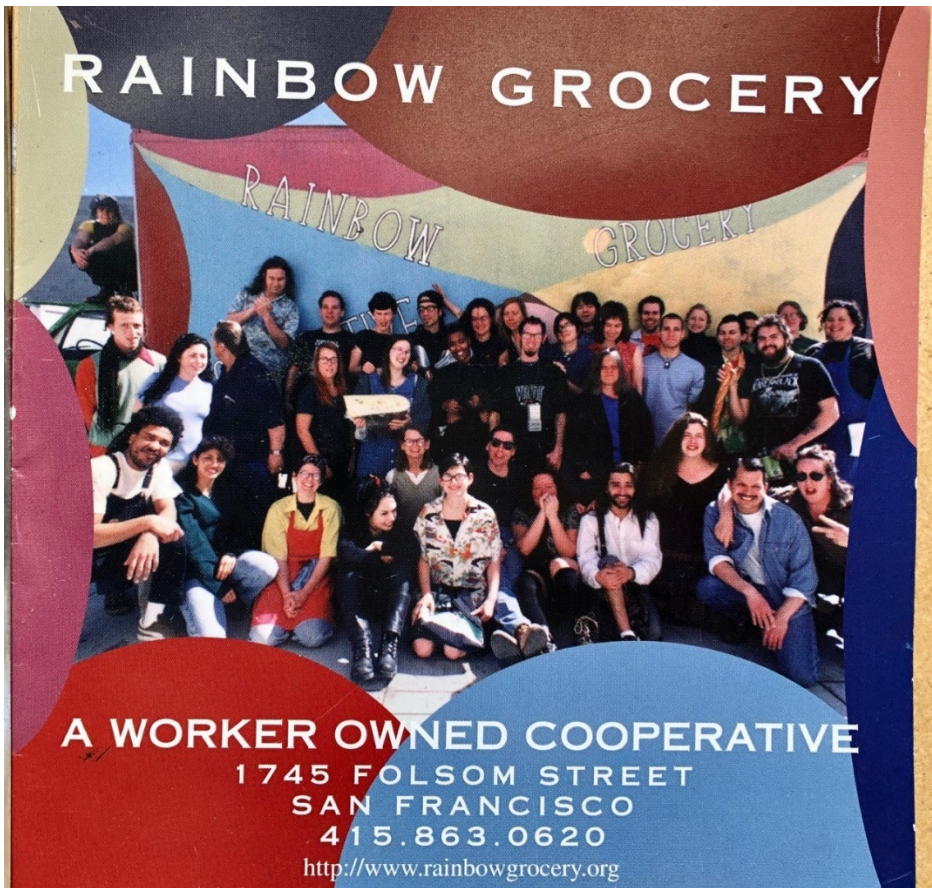
In 2002, Rainbow installed on our roof, what was then, the largest bank of photo voltaic solar panels in San Francisco.



Left: Rainbow representing at Green Fest. Right: Rainbow workers' kids carrying our banner in the Cesar Chavez Day parade.



Rainbow workers have enthusiastically participated in the Folsom Street Fair since its early days. This picture is estimated to have been taken there in 2005.



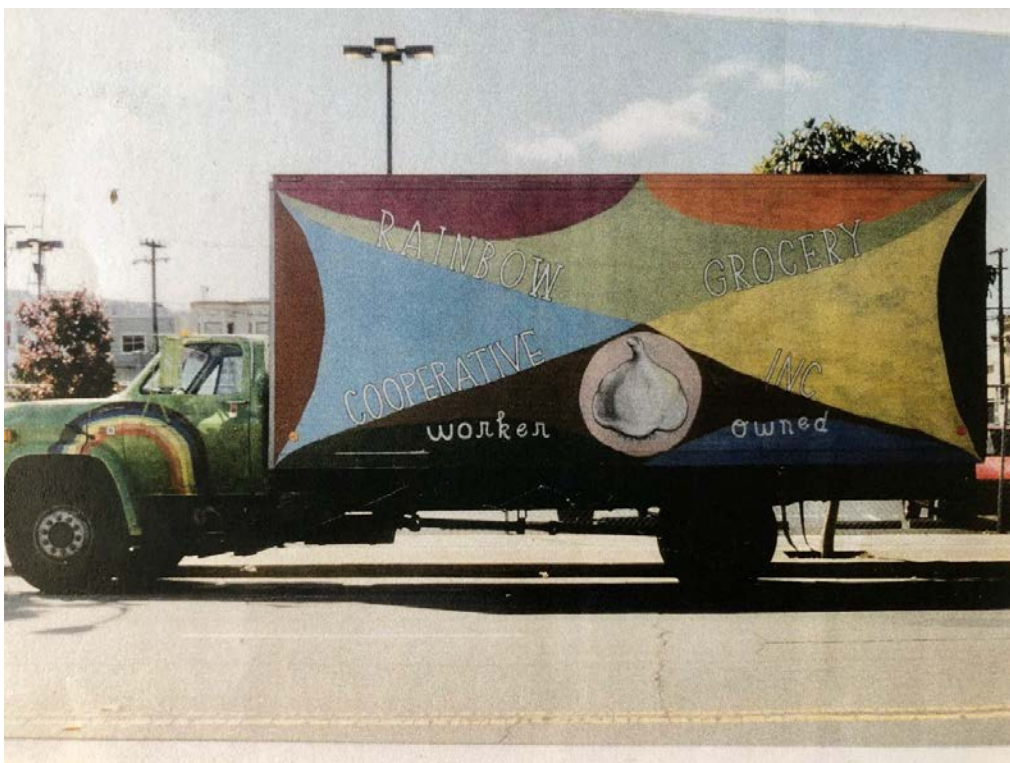
The front and back of an old ad/coupon we put out shortly after moving into our Folsom St location.



Workers, artists and customers celebrating the installation of what was arguably one of the strangest murals in SF, formerly located on the Trainor Alley side of our building. Major portions of the mural were constructed of plywood and eventually posed a hazard, so had to come down.



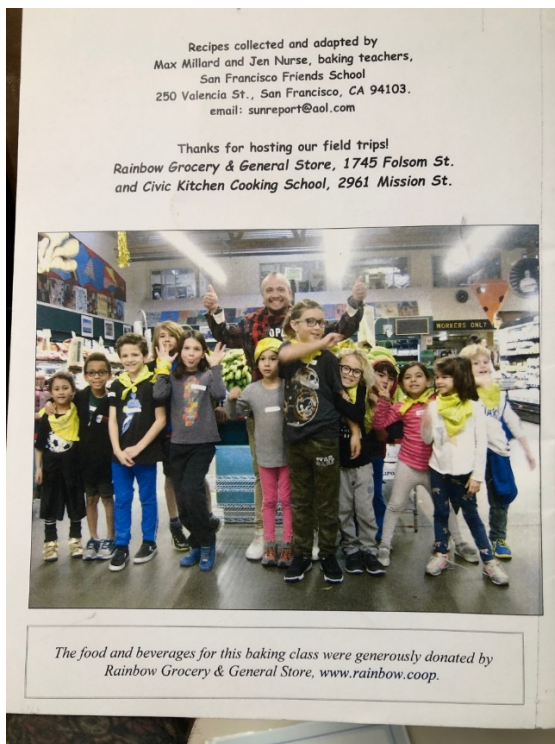
Workers posing on our forklift, in front of our box truck, some time in the 00's.



Two versions of the paint jobs on our box truck. For most of our years in business, our produce buyers would drive to the produce markets 7 days a week.



Rainbow has been repeatedly voted Best Grocery Store by local newspapers etc. We don't do a good job of keeping track, but it seems like it's been nearly every year (if not actually every year).



Our store has been featured in periodicals ranging from "homespun" style local school cookbooks, to national industry magazines.

Finished Product

RAINBOW GROCERY COOPERATIVE



WORKING
COLLECTIVELY
TO BRING YOU
WHOLESOME FOOD

OUR REGULAR HOURS ARE :
MONDAY THRU SATURDAY
9 A.M. TO 9 P.M.
SUNDAY
10 A.M. TO 9 P.M.

WE ARE CLOSED THESE DAYS:

NEW YEAR'S DAY

MARTIN LUTHER KING

MAY DAY*

GAY DAY

LABOR DAY

THANKSGIVING

CHRISTMAS

WE CLOSE AT 6.P.M. ON JUNE 30 FOR INVENTORY

*MAY DAY, ALSO KNOWN AS
INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY,
IS CELEBRATED TO HONOR THE WORKERS
WHO WERE KILLED BY THE POLICE IN 1886
IN CHICAGO WHILE DEMONSTRATING
FOR AN 8 HOUR WORK DAY,
AND TO HONOR THE ONGOING
STRUGGLE FOR THE RIGHTS
OF ALL LABORERS WORLDWIDE

FOR MORE INFORMATION
ON THE HISTORY OF MAY DAY VISIT:
WWW.ACCESSWEB.COM/MAYDAY/HISTORY.HTML
OR READ **STRIKE!** BY JEREMY BRECHER AND
**DYNAMITE! A CENTURY OF CLASS
VIOLENCE IN AMERICA**
BY LOUIS ADAMIC

The front and back of a pamphlet we put out in the 00's.

HISTORY

RAINBOW HAS BEEN IN SAN FRANCISCO'S MISSION DISTRICT SINCE 1975. IT EVOLVED OUT OF THE "PEOPLE'S FOOD SYSTEM", A NETWORK OF GROCERY AND WHOLESALE FOOD COMPANIES THAT FLOURISHED IN THE BAY AREA IN THE 70'S. THE PREVAILING PHILOSOPHY OF THE NETWORK WAS TO EMPOWER COMMUNITIES TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO START COLLECTIVE FOOD STORES IN THEIR OWN NEIGHBORHOODS, PROVIDING GREATER ACCESS TO QUALITY FOOD FOR MORE PEOPLE. THE PEOPLE'S FOOD SYSTEM BECAME INTERNALLY POLARIZED AND POLITICIZED, AND FINALLY DISINTEGRATED AFTER A FATAL SHOOTING DURING A GROUP MEETING. RAINBOW WAS UNIQUE AS A COLLECTIVE FOOD STORE IN THAT IT WAS BEGUN BY EIGHT PEOPLE WHO SHARED A COMMON MEDITATION PRACTICE. THEY SAW THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GARAGE BASED FOOD STORE AS AN EXTENSION OF THAT PRACTICE AND WORKED WITHOUT ANY PAY. THE SELLING OF WHOLE, VEGETARIAN FOOD AND OPERATING AS A WORKER DEMOCRACY WERE SOME OF OUR ORIGINAL ASPIRED GOALS; AND THESE PRINCIPLES CONTINUE TO GUIDE US TODAY. THE FOOD STORE OPENED ITS FIRST STORE-FRONT ON 16TH STREET, WHERE CAFE MACONDO IS NOW, THEN MOVED TO MISSION AND 15TH IN 1984. RAINBOW OPENED AT ITS CURRENT LOCATION APRIL 25TH, 1996, WHERE WE CONTINUE TO THRIVE.

RAINBOW GROCERY IS A WORKER OWNED COOPERATIVE. THIS MEANS THAT OUR WORKERS SHARE THE PROFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF RUNNING OUR STORE.

WE HAVE NO "MANAGERS" OR BOSSES. OUR DECISION MAKING PROCESS IS ACHIEVED THROUGH DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES, ELECTED COMMITTEES AND LOTS OF MEETINGS. OUR MEMBERSHIP IS COMPRISED OF OUR WORKERS. WE ARE NOT A CONSUMER COOPERATIVE. WE HAVE YEARLY ELECTIONS FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP TO CHOOSE OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND THE OTHER COMMITTEES WHO GUIDE OUR STORE. ALL WORKERS ARE AFFORDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE THEIR INPUT AND AFFECT THE MANNER IN WHICH OUR STORE IS RUN.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR COOPERATIVE'S STRUCTURE AND HISTORY, LOOK AT OUR WEB SITE:

WWW.RAINBOWGROCERY.ORG

FOR INFORMATION ON OTHER COOPERATIVES IN THE BAY AREA LOOK AT THE WEBSITE FOR THE NETWORK OF BAY AREA COLLECTIVES (NOBAWC)

WWW.NOBAWC.THECOOP.ORG

OR READ THE CHAPTER ON FOOD POLITICS IN

[RECLAIMING SAN FRANCISCO](#)

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HERE ARE SOME OF THE DISCOUNTS THAT RAINBOW OFFERS TO OUR CUSTOMERS

NO BAWC MEMBERS 10%
SENIOR CITIZENS 10%
HELPING HANDS 10%

CASE DISCOUNTS 10%

BATH & BODY OR VITAMIN PURCHASES

OVER \$100

10%

OVER \$200

15%

OVER \$400

20%



USING YOUR OWN BAG EARNS
YOU A 10 CENT DISCOUNT
OFF YOUR TOTAL

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHERE IS THE MEAT?

IT ISN'T HERE. RAINBOW ONLY SELLS FOOD THAT IS VEGETARIAN.

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH BULK PRODUCTS?

WE OFFER MANY PRODUCTS IN BULK, SAVING YOU MONEY, ALLOWING YOU TO PURCHASE THE EXACT AMOUNT YOU WANT AND ELIMINATING WASTEFUL PACKAGING. WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO BRING YOUR OWN CONTAINERS FOR BULK ITEMS AND TO WEIGH THEM BEFORE THEY ARE FILLED.

WHAT ARE THE BIN NUMBERS AND WHY DO WE HAVE TO WRITE THEM DOWN?

WHEN PURCHASING BULK ITEMS WRITING THE BIN NUMBER DOWN IDENTIFIES WHAT THE PRODUCT IS FOR OUR CASHIERS AND FOR INVENTORY PURPOSES.

CAN I BECOME A MEMBER OF RAINBOW?

WE ARE A WORKER OWNED COOPERATIVE, NOT A CONSUMER COOPERATIVE. ANYONE CAN SHOP HERE, AND WE WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK, BUT TO BECOME A "MEMBER" YOU MUST BE EMPLOYED AT RAINBOW, WORK 1000 HOURS AND COMPLETE A COLLECTIVE MEMBER TRAINING.

Inside images of our pamphlet from the 00's. We'd have these at our customer service desk, and offer them at events.



SHARE

We've never been so excited for a grocery store: SF's Rainbow Grocery

When:

Daily, 9am-9pm

Where:

1745 Folsom St.
San Francisco, CA 94103

BART Station:

16th St.
Mission
(SF)

Walk Time: 10 minutes

Website: [Rainbow
Grocery Coop](http://RainbowGroceryCoop.com)

Phone: (415) 863-0620

It's where localvores have long been filling their cloth bags with healthy edible goods and locally sourced products. Before "certified organic" and "green business" were the commonly spoken identifiers in the world of food sales they have come to be, Rainbow Grocery was promoting a socially and environmentally minded mission it remains loyal to today.

What began as a volunteer-run operation born out of an ashram's need for bulk vegetarian goods, turned into a worker-owned cooperative that has stood as an iconic San Francisco independent grocery store since 1975. Now located at 1745 Folsom St., the thoughtfully stocked market is a 10-minute walk from 16th St. Mission BART Station and keeps its doors open 9am to 9pm every day of the week.

Holistic practitioners, vegetarian shoppers and discerning chefs hip to the latest ingredients converge at the renowned hub where both high-end foodies and grassroots activists find common ground. Ultimately committed to a respectful give-and-take-to-share ethos, the expansive market goes to great lengths to honor both the larger community and natural environment at hand. Sustainable practices in myriad forms are at the foundation of the Rainbow way.

Here, healthy working conditions and fair business practices are taken just as seriously as the quality of natural health foods drawing customers to its signature green awning. While aisles are meticulously lined with organic fruits and veggies culled from local organic farms, and the fittingly colorful array of bulk herbs and spices, health books and natural supplements span enough options to keep even the pickiest (and most curious) of consumers satiated, employees work side by side as a collective minus a hierarchical system.

Trending

[36 minutes in Pleasant Hill/Contra Costa Centre](#)

[BARTable This Weekend: March 26-28](#)

[Tips for riding BART during COVID-19](#)

[BARTable Walk: Embarcadero to Presidio](#)

[Take BART to the game](#)

Eligible riders get 20% off fare with new Clipper START program

20% off BART fares for eligible riders
Start saving with Clipper START!
Learn more at clipperstartcard.com | START >>>

NEW! BART merch now available online

LA BART T-SHIRT Available in black, navy, and white. \$20 each.	OLD FASHION BART T-SHIRT Black, navy, or white. \$20 each.	PRIDE T-SHIRT OR JUNK TEE Black, navy, or white. \$20 each.
PIECE OF THE PICTURE T-SHIRT \$20 each.	BART BART CARD BY BART \$20 each.	SOCKS BY BART \$20 each.

Grab a cart and get ready to browse through an impressive (and even intimidating) selection of bulk grains, kimchis, gluten-free breads, and hard-to-find specialty ethnic foods that will take your kitchen to a whole new level. Also on hand to complement the cache of organic foods are non-toxic cleaning supplies, household sundries and gift ideas.





by **Linda Koffman**

Linda Koffman is an SF-based freelance writer and editor. Also a beginner gardener by day/performing songwriter by night, she feels grateful to live a life of extremes balancing plenty of contemplative silence with rocking out in a band. When not writing, she keeps her hands busy (and dirty) with old guitar strings and soil, and enjoys engaging with the Bay Area's diverse environmental and cultural beauty. She loves puns to a fault and shamelessly laughs at her own jokes.

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[Bay Area urban hikes you can get to by BART](#)
Our complete list of urban hikes



[BARTable Walk: Embarcadero to Presidio](#)



[Tips for riding BART during COVID-19](#)



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Rainbow Grocery Cooperative Stays True to Its Soul-Satisfying Mission



The Rainbow Grocery is on a street that members of our team often travel, going from San Francisco to other parts of the Bay Area and back. The happy rainbow graphic alone is a comforting sight for us, reminding that this worker-owned cooperative has always been supportive and even intertwined with our local LGBTQ community for decades. You can also find the *San Francisco Bay Times* there! The store is one of our longtime distribution points. We are proud to be in this Mission District landmark spot, now 41 years old. Rainbow Grocery supports fair labor practices, offers affordable vegetarian foods with minimal negative ecological impact, donates to local non-profits and schools, supports organic farmers and other small local businesses and much more.

At the center of it all are the co-op's dedicated workers.

"Our Worker-Owners have been extremely busy keeping the business afloat," Esteban Garcia of Rainbow says. "As Worker-Owners, we take pride in making sure the job gets done because we're fully invested in keeping the business running. Work It! Own It! When we are not busy running the place, our collective members are busy with their lives. We have many Worker-Owners who are artists ranging from chefs, painters, musicians, creative designers. The list goes on."

Their creative energy also carries over to the store, where there is always something very cool going on. For example, last month, Rainbow Grocery teamed up with other Bay Area co-ops and hosted movie nights at Sports Basement SF and had a pizza party that showed how to use essential oils topically and in foods. The store also recently hosted Vegan Iron Chef, B-Magic and AfroSolo events.

This year, Rainbow launched a customer appreciation program, providing easy access to sales, coupons and informative newsletters. The materials provide a welcome respite during this hectic post-election holiday period.

But you might be wondering why we're featuring a veggie-centric store at a time when many are considering roasted turkey, holiday hams and other meaty fare. It's because their food is delicious! There is such a difference in taste between a crisp and juicy farm-fresh apple, for example, versus some of the waxed up mush you find at the box stores. Rainbow is also stacked to its rafters with great seasonal items now. Below are a few holiday recipes featuring some of the store's most popular products.



Vegan Stuffing with Almonds, Apples & Dried Cranberries

(Shared by Frontier Co-op)

Ingredients:

- 8–9 cups whole grain bread, cubed
- 1/2 cup walnuts, coarsely chopped
- 6 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1-1/2 cups shallots, peeled and chopped
- 2-1/2 cups tart apples, chopped
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 2 tsp. Frontier Organic Marjoram
- 2 tsp. Frontier Vegetable Broth Powder
- 1/8 tsp. Frontier Organic Nutmeg
- 1/8 tsp. Frontier Organic Allspice
- 3/4 tsp. Frontier Organic Lemon Peel
- 1/2 tsp. Frontier Organic Black Pepper, or to taste
- 3/4 tsp. sea salt, or to taste
- 1 cup boiling water

Directions:

1. Preheat oven 325 degrees F.
2. In two shallow baking pans, spread bread cubes. Bake on two racks in oven, switching halfway through, for 20 to 25 minutes, until golden. Cool, then transfer to large bowl.
3. In large, heavy dry skillet over medium heat, toast walnuts, stirring constantly for 1 to 2 minutes, until golden brown. Remove walnuts and add olive oil to pan. Add shallots and cook, stirring frequently, for 15 to 20 minutes, until browned. Add apples, marjoram, salt, pepper, nutmeg and allspice. Cook 8 to 10 minutes more, stirring occasionally, until apples begin to soften. Remove from heat.
4. In heavy saucepan over medium heat, bring orange juice and cranberries to simmer. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 6 to 8 minutes, until juice is absorbed.
5. Add cranberries and apple mixture to bread cubes and stir. Add walnuts and lemon peel and stir again.
6. Mix vegetable broth powder with water, stirring to dissolve. Add to the bread cube mixture and toss well.
7. In a well-oiled, 2-1/2 quart shallow baking dish, place stuffing mixture. Cover and bake for 30 minutes. Uncover and bake 30 minutes more, until browned.

Cooking tip: Stuffing can be assembled (but not baked) two days ahead, then kept covered in the refrigerator. Bring to room temperature before baking.

Pumpkin Spice Old Fashioned

(Shared by Mt. Rose Herbs)

Ingredients:

- 1 tsp. Love Tea simple syrup (recipe below)
- 2 oz. bourbon
- 4 droppers of orange cardamom bitters (recipe below)
- 2–4 dashes of organic Pumpkin Pie Spice blend
- 1 organic navel orange
- 1 organic cinnamon stick

Directions:

Add simple syrup, bitters, bourbon, and pumpkin pie spice in the bottom of a double Old Fashioned glass. Stir until combined. Peel 1 large strip of orange zest using a vegetable peeler and twist the peel over the glass, releasing its oils. Wipe the pith-side of the peel around the rim of the glass and toss into the glass. Put desired amount of ice in glass and garnish with cinnamon stick and orange wedge.

Stuffing with Apple, Dried Cherries & Herb Brown Butter

(Shared by Field Roast)

Ingredients:

4 cups ½-inch cubes (vegan) cornbread 4 cups ½-inch cubes (vegan) sourdough bread
 6 Tbsp. vegan butter, divided
 Scant 2 cups ¼-inch-thick half-moons celery
 Scant 1-½ cups thinly sliced leeks
 ½ cup finely chopped red onions
 2-½ tsp. minced garlic
 3 cups ½-inch cubes peeled and cored Granny Smith apples
 4 Smoked Apple Sage Field Roast Sausages, crumbled
 3 Tbsp. minced fresh sage leaves
 1 Tbsp. minced fresh rosemary
 ½ cup sweetened dried cranberries
 2 cups reduced-sodium vegetable broth
 ⅓ cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
 ¼ cup egg substitute (equivalent to 2 eggs)
 1 tsp. coarse salt
 8 grinds black pepper

Directions:

1. Heat the oven to 375°F.
2. Pour the cornbread and sourdough cubes onto a baking sheet with sides. Once the oven is hot, toast until golden brown and dried out, about 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and set aside (leave the oven on).
3. Meanwhile, heat 2 tablespoons vegan butter in a 12-inch, heavy, nonstick sauté pan (with 2 to 3-inch-high sides) over medium-high heat. Once the butter is melted, add the celery, leeks, red onions, and garlic, and sauté until softened, about 8 minutes. Add the apples and crumbled sausage and simmer, stirring occasionally and breaking up the sausage with a wooden spoon, until the apples are tender, about 6 minutes. Remove from the heat.
4. Meanwhile, melt the remaining 4 tablespoons vegan butter over medium heat in a small, heavy frying pan. Once it is melted, let it bubble for a minute, and then stir in the fresh sage and rosemary leaves. Let bubble for 1 minute, until the butter turns very light golden, and then remove from the heat and set aside. Meanwhile, place the cranberries in a small bowl, cover with very hot water, and let sit to soften, 10 to 15 minutes. Drain.
5. In a large bowl, combine the cranberries, bread cubes, vegetable-apple-sausage mixture, vegan butter (scrape it out of the pan), vegetable broth, parsley, egg substitute, salt, and pepper, using tongs to mix gently, but well. Spray the entire inside of a 9 x 13 x 2-inch glass baking dish with cooking spray. Pour the stuffing mixture inside and spread evenly, flattening it down. Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 40 minutes. Uncover and cook for another 20 minutes, until golden brown on top and tender and fluffy inside. Serve.

Serving Suggestions: Pair with braised winter greens. For dessert, serve pumpkin pie or a cranberry tart.

Try This: If you prefer your stuffing more savory than sweet, use all sourdough and no cornbread. Substitute sautéed mushrooms and Field Roast Italian Sausage for the dried cranberries.

For more information about Rainbow Grocery, including its holiday schedule, please visit: <http://www.rainbow.coop/>