

# Get Your Foot in the Door: Health Center Strategies for Initiating Relationships with Growers, Contractors, and Employers

This resource provides strategies, specifically for health centers, in identifying and connecting with growers, contractors, and employers that employ Migratory and Seasonal Agricultural Workers (MSAWs). These four strategies are a compilation of successful approaches health center staff and outreach specialists have used to prepare for reaching out to growers, contractors, and employers to increase MSAW access to essential health care services. The resource also includes tools available for you to implement each recommended strategy.



## 1. Map agricultural work in your community.

To identify growers, contractors, and employers to partner with and the most effective times to contact them, you first need to understand what is planted and harvested in your community and when. Knowing this will give you an idea of when MSAWs come into the area for work and help you determine the best time to conduct outreach. It is also important to consider year-round work such as animal production, aquaculture, and processing plants. All agricultural work is at risk of changes based on climate, market demands, and many other factors.

Questions to consider:

- What is planted/ harvested in the Spring? Summer? Fall?
- What year-round work is available? (i.e., animal production, aquaculture, etc.)
- Who is employing agricultural workers in the area?

### Tools Available

- [USDA Census of Agriculture State & County Profiles](#): Website that provides county-level information about top crops, livestock/poultry, and other products in your service area, along with number of farms and demographic information on producers.
- [Ag Worker Client Profile](#): Tool to create patient groups based on similar characteristics like location, employer, language, season/hours, etc.

## 2. Determine the number of Agricultural workers in your service area.

Determining the number of MSAWs in the counties you serve will help better understand the landscape of your service area. Comparing this number to your Uniform Data System (UDS) data of reported number of MSAWs served by your health center will give you an idea of how many MSAWs and dependents are not being seen at your health center so you can set realistic goals and better tailor your outreach efforts.

Questions to consider:

- How many MSAWs migrate to/from this area?
- How many MSAWs has my health center reached?
- How many MSAWs are we not reaching?
- How many dependents are we missing?

### Tools Available

- **Population Estimation:** Tool that displays estimates of the number of contract and directly hired MSAWs by county in the United States on an interactive map.
- **HRSA Health Center Program UDS Data Overview tool:** Tool that provides UDS data overview of the past 5 years for every health center program awardee. Select your state, health center name, select “Patient Characteristics”, scroll down to “Special Populations” to see your MSAW patient trends.

## 3. Find out where agricultural workers in your service area live and work.

Establishing where MSAWs live and work will help you prioritize your outreach strategy to target high impact areas and identify the growers, employers, and contractors to reach out to. You can also explore areas MSAWs often frequent in the community, like markets, churches, parks, etc.

Questions to consider:

- Where do MSAWs live? Where do they work?
- Are there other locations they frequent?
- Where are employers located?
- Which employers hire workers through the H-2A visa program? When do their contracts start and end?

To learn about strategies for identifying and contacting H-2A employers in your service area, watch this [NCFH archived webinar](#).

### Tools Available

- **NCFH’s Farm Labor Data Dashboard:** An interactive, web-based tool with key data like the number of H-2A workers and estimated number of livestock workers in a given county or state. It also includes county-level data on number of jobs, broken down by month of the year.
- **Department of Labor (DOL) Seasonal Jobs Database:** Website that lists information about all H-2A workers in a specific area (how many workers, when they arrive, when they leave, where they will be living and working, and most importantly, contact information for employers).
- **idrc Agricultural Information Portal:** This tool provides a listing of agriculture resources by state, such as:
  - Farm labor contract lists
  - Mobile home park and rural housing lists
  - USDA Egg Poultry and Meat Processing Inspection Lists

## 4. Use partnerships to identify employer, contractor, and grower contact information and build your collaboration network.

Partnerships are crucial for successful outreach to growers, employers, and contractors. Collaborate with organizations and agencies like agriculture associations and state monitor advocates (SMAs) that growers, employers, and contractors interact with regularly to establish a connection with them. Grower associations are trusted messengers for individual employers. If you introduce yourself to these associations, they can introduce you to their individual members. Local Extension Agents are also key partners for distributing health center information to growers and for crop and harvest season specific information in your area. They host regular meetings that could be a platform for presentations.

*To learn more about SMAs and how they assist health centers in forging relationships with growers, watch this [NCFH archived webinar](#).*

*To find local contact information for extension agents in your area, type into an online search engine “(County Name) agriculture extension agents.”*

### Tools Available

- **State Monitor Advocate (SMAs) Directory:** List of SMAs that can assist health centers with establishing relationships with growers.
- **Ag Worker Access Partner Profile:** Tool that assists in identifying potential partners to support your health center’s efforts to increase access to care for MSAWs and their families.



## Tips from the Field to get your “foot in the door”

**Introduce Yourself.** Let them know who your organization is and why you are reaching out. Make all growers, employers, and/or contractors in the area aware of your role and health center services.

- Distribute a flyer or letter explaining the services your health center has to offer.
- Develop a welcome packet and invite growers and employers to be patients of your health center in addition to their employees.

**Have something to offer.** Share resources, trainings, information, etc. that may interest them. Identify a reason to collaborate.

- Share the benefits of preventative services. Offer to conduct onsite screenings/services like blood pressure screenings, flu vaccinations, or COVID-19 vaccinations.
- Offer to facilitate a training/presentation at a Grower Association/Employer meeting.
- Share the benefits of a healthy workforce. Provide information about agricultural worker health and programs you have specifically for their employees. Offer to organize a health event or “family night” in the field where services are provided to agricultural workers and their families.
- Share health center cards, flyers, or brochures the grower, employer, or contractor can distribute to their employees.

**Be flexible.** Offer convenient times to meet.

- Avoid disrupting work schedules when offering onsite services and visits.
- Align communication with growers, contractors, and employers before arrival dates of workers and harvest season.

**Be persistent.** Don't give up! If a grower, employer, and/or contractor is not available to meet today, follow-up at a later date and continue reaching out.

- Set up a meeting to discuss their concerns or hesitations.
- Offer other ways to connect agricultural workers to your health center by referrals.
- Develop a plan to communicate with the grower, employer, and/or contractor again (in 2 weeks, 1 month, 3 months, etc.).

For further questions and information, [contact NCFH.](#)