CDC Partnership with National Farmworker Organizations for COVID-19 Outreach and Vaccination

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Migrant farmworkers in the US

• 2.5 million farmworkers*

• “Essential critical infrastructure” workers and at higher risk of COVID-19
  • Overcrowded work, housing, and travel (domestic and international)
  • Immigration status
  • Experience poverty
  • Limited English proficiency
  • Limited access to health care

• Gaps
  • Multiple reports of outbreaks and barriers to information, testing, treatment, and vaccination
  • Multiple organizations serving agricultural workers, but uncoordinated strategies and limited capacity

How are farmworkers’ needs addressed within the CDC COVID-19 response structure?

- **Multiple Task Forces and Teams** with activities related to farmworkers
  - **Farmworkers Interest Group**
    - Share information and coordinate activities
    - Collaborate with other federal agencies
- **Global Migration Task Force** is leading farmworker specific projects
CDC partnership with national network of farmworker-serving organizations

- 5-year Cooperative Agreement
  - Currently in Year 2
  - Funding secured for Year 3

- Led by National Center for Farmworker Health
  - [http://www.ncfh.org/infectious_diseases.html](http://www.ncfh.org/infectious_diseases.html)

- Objectives:
  - Strengthen organizations’ coordination and outreach capacity to address public health emergencies and emerging infectious disease issues
  - Enhance education, access, and adoption of COVID-19 preventive measures among farmworkers and employers
CDC/NCFH national partnership network structure

- National Advisory Council
- CDC Technical Advisory Group
- NCFH
- FW Health Network
- Community-based orgs
- Migrant Education
- Migrant Health Centers
- Farmworker Legal Aid
- Ag employers
- Local & state PH
- Universities

Farmworkers and Family Members
Partnership COVID-19 outreach & education strategies

• Develop and adapt education materials in multiple languages and formats

• Direct funding, trainings, and technical assistance to 43 local organizations to conduct outreach and facilitate access to vaccination and testing

• Assist ag employers in testing, vaccinating workers

• National radio and social media campaign in Spanish and indigenous languages

• Conduct farmworker community assessment surveys

http://www.ncfh.org/covid.html
(New) Partnership has proven to be highly impactful (Year 1 project outcomes)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th># of farmworkers and family members</th>
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<tr>
<td>Education (digital or face-to-face outreach)</td>
<td>875,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>COVID-19 testing referrals</td>
<td>27,000</td>
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<td>Health and social services referrals</td>
<td>78,000</td>
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<td>PPE items distributed (e.g., masks, hand sanitizers)</td>
<td>400,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Received at least 1 dose of COVID-19 vaccine</td>
<td>63,000</td>
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PPE = personal protective equipment
FARMWORKER COVID-19
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENTS

Photo credits: all provided by NCFH
Counties included in 5 completed Community Assessments (August-December, 2021)

Central Coast, CA: Monterey, Tulare & Kern (Aug-Oct, 2021)

El Paso, TX; Dona Ana, NM (Sept-Oct, 2021)

Calhoun & Coahoma, MS (Aug-Oct, 2021)

Hidalgo, TX (Sept-Oct, 2021)

Collier, FL (Dec, 2021)
Mixed-methods based on CDC’s Rapid Community Assessment Guide

1. Analysis of existing data
   - Assess local farmworker population size, characteristics, farm and housing locations
   - NCFH Ag Dashboard

2. Key informant interviews

3. Sampling survey
   - By phone or in-person at key locations (e.g., farms, housing, community sites)

COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence Rapid Community Assessment Guide (cdc.gov)
Addendum: Considerations for Conducting Rapid Community Assessment in Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Communities-January, 2022 (cdc.gov)
Selected survey results
(Full reports: FCCA - NATIONAL CENTER FOR FARMWORKER HEALTH (ncfh.org))
Percent of respondents fully vaccinated* compared to county population

*Completed a primary series of a FDA or WHO accepted COVID-19 vaccine
Differences in full COVID-19 vaccination by socio-demographics

- Groups with lower vaccination coverage:
  - Younger age group (18-25 yrs old)
  - Indigenous persons, compared to other racial/ethnic groups

- No clear pattern by nativity or immigration status among communities
Percent ever tested for COVID-19 by community

- Central Coast, CA: 61%
- Hidalgo County, TX: 32%
- El Paso, TX/Dona Ana, NM: 56%
- Calhoun/Coahoma Counties, MS: 23%
- Collier County, FL: 61%

Percent that have been tested for COVID-19 at some point in pandemic
Upcoming Community Assessments

- May
- June
- October
- April
- December

- Completed
- Upcoming
Other CDC farmworker-focused initiatives
1. CDC COVID-19 guidance for agricultural workers, employers, and partners

- Published multiple guidance documents and tools:

- Webpage and toolkit for H-2A workers and employers

2. Technical support to health departments

- CDC experts' participation in **webinars and technical assistance calls with partner organizations**
- **CDC teams deployed** to assist with surveillance data analysis, community assessments, and outbreak investigations
  - Chelan-Douglas Health District, Washington State
  - Imperial County, California
  - Yuma County, Arizona
  - Morrow and Umatilla Counties, Oregon
- Current collaboration with the California Department of Public Health
3. Assess mobility patterns of farmworkers

- **Project objective:**
  - Document best current evidence on farmworkers’ mobility patterns (e.g., origin, destination, travel routes)

- **Methodology**
  - Conducted by U.S. and Mexico expert teams
  - Analysis of existing data sources
  - Key informant interviews
  - Participatory mapping

Outdated and poorly documented migration maps from the 1970’s
4. COVID-19 program for H-2A workers

- Pilot **free, voluntary COVID-19 testing** before arriving to the United States
  - Collaboration with **National Council of Agricultural Employers (NCAE)** and U.S. Consulates in Mexico
  - Implemented through panel physicians in Mexico
  - Provided health education and information about access to health care in the United States
  - If + test, followed isolation recommendations (employers assisted with housing needs)

- **COVID-19 vaccination at the US-Mexico border** (Summer 2021)
  - Collaboration with **NCAE** and San Diego County health department
Closing Remarks

- **Farmworkers are a priority population** for public health emergency preparedness and response
- Partnership between the CDC and a national network of farmworker-serving organizations and employers is critical to protect the agricultural workforce and industry, including:
  - Sustained support (funding and technical assistance)
  - Ongoing monitoring of agricultural workers’ disease burden and access to prevention measures
  - Enhanced coordination among federal and state agencies
  - Expand to non-emergency health issues
Acknowledgements

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For more information, contact CDC
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)

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The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.