

U.S. National Pulse on Infectious Diseases among Farmworkers

Keeping a pulse on the health of farmworkers in the U.S.

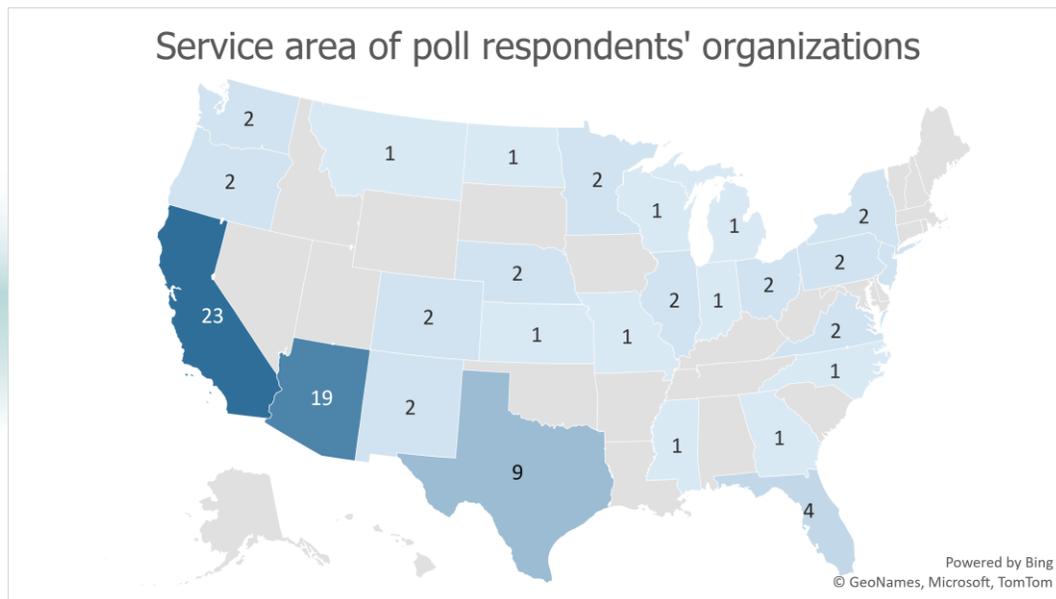
January Edition 2023: COVID-19 Surge After the Holidays & Updated Boosters

The purpose of this National Pulse is to systematically collect and share timely, significant network insights, current media stories, and research about issues and trends concerning COVID-19, influenza, and other emerging infectious diseases among farmworkers in the U.S. This edition includes...

1. findings from a national poll of farmworker-serving organizations;
2. insights from recent data collection efforts with farmworkers; and
3. a summary of recent research and media articles published

Network Insights

At the beginning of January 2023, NCFH circulated a short poll in English and Spanish via email to a total of 284 network contacts. These contacts include **executive and outreach staff of Migrant Health Centers, farmworker-serving non-profit organizations, and health department staff**, and are all affiliated with NCFH through various networks and contracts. A total of **92 recipients participated in the poll, who serve farmworkers in 27 states** across the country. The topic of this month's poll was "COVID-19 Surge After the Holidays & Updated Boosters."



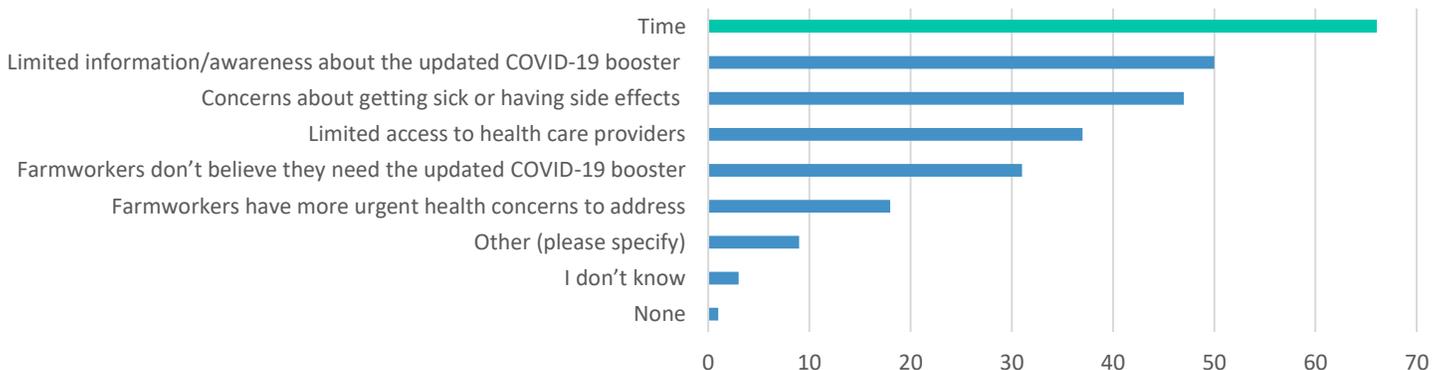
89% of respondents work directly with farmworkers

76% of poll respondents are somewhat or very concerned about a COVID-19 surge among farmworkers after the holidays. Updated (bivalent) COVID-19 booster vaccinations became available in September 2022 for people 12 years of age and older, and October 2022 for children aged 5-11. CDC recommends that people ages 5 years and older receive one updated (bivalent) booster if it has been at least 2 months since their last COVID-19 vaccine dose, whether that was their final primary series dose, or an original (monovalent) booster. People who have gotten more than one original (monovalent) booster are also recommended to get an updated (bivalent) booster.

The updated (bivalent) boosters are called “bivalent” because they protect against both the original virus that causes COVID-19 and the Omicron variant BA.4 and BA.5. For more information, visit the CDC webpage: [Stay Up to Date with Vaccines](#).

Based on their work with farmworkers, respondents identified “time” as a major barrier for farmworkers to get the updated COVID-19 booster in their communities - including lack of time, being unable to take time off work, limited clinic hours, and waiting room time among other time constraints. Other common responses for barriers were limited information/awareness about the updated COVID-19 booster vaccine (e.g. unaware who should get the booster vaccine) and concerns about getting sick or having side effects. Several respondents wrote in other barriers including: 1) lack of transportation to and from vaccine locations, and 2) fear of losing their job from asking employer’s permission to go to the doctor.

Time is a major barrier farmworkers face in getting the updated COVID-19 booster
(e.g. lack of time, unable to take time off of work, limited clinic hours, etc)



“They’re afraid to ask permission because afterwards they stop them if they do it, they don’t respect their rights as workers” – Poll respondent

“ellos tienen miedo pedir permiso porque después los paran si lo hacen ,no respetan sus derechos como trabajadores...” – Participante de la encuesta

Respondents ranked **the most important types of resources that farmworkers need to get the updated COVID booster.**

1. Transportation
2. Information about available vaccine clinics
3. Medical bill coverage
4. Health education
5. Interpretation services

In addition, one respondent noted that farmworkers need information about their rights as workers.

Respondents also ranked **the most important types of resources that organizations need about the updated COVID booster.**

1. Information on available health care resources
2. Training
3. Health education materials
4. Additional outreach staff

Several respondents also noted that organizations need PPE and supplies such as masks, home COVID-19 tests, and hand sanitizer to distribute to farmworkers.

Types of trainings that would be useful for organizations include:

1. How the updated booster (bivalent vaccine) works and how effective it is
2. Side effects of the updated booster
3. Popular education techniques to communicate about the updated booster
4. Messaging tips to communicate about the booster (including motivational interviewing)

Respondents identified the **formats of health education materials** they prefer:

1. Flyers
2. Social media content (including short video clips)
3. Videos
4. Text messages

*“We have to go to them, they don’t want to lose a day of work, because of retaliation.”
– Poll respondent*

*“Tenemos que ir a ellos, no quieren perder un día de trabajo, debido a represalias.”
– Participante de la encuesta*



NCFH Data Collection Updates: Farmworker COVID-19 Community Assessments (FCCAs)

NCFH published the findings from rapid community assessments in two communities.

For Atlantic and Cumberland Counties, New Jersey, a total of 224 farmworkers were surveyed between July and August of 2022. Survey results indicate that 74% of respondents had completed their initial series of a COVID-19 vaccine. However, only 36% of respondents had received at least one booster dose. [Read the full report.](#)

A total of 302 farmworkers were surveyed in August 2022 in Yakima County, Washington. More than four in five respondents (84%) completed their initial series of a COVID-19 vaccine which was higher than the county wide vaccine uptake at that time (78.5%). Similar to the results in New Jersey, booster uptake was lower, with only 27% of respondents having received at least one booster dose. [Read the full report.](#)

Learn more about the FCCA methods and findings at NCFH's National Webinar, February 9th [Register today.](#)

To learn more about NCFH's Farmworker COVID-19 Community Assessments, [CLICK HERE.](#)

Media & Research

Media Articles

[California Farmworkers Still Struggle with Health Care Access](#)

Siliconeer, January 6, 2023

[Farmworkers' working and living conditions take a mental health toll](#)

Sacramento News & Review, December 19, 2022

[Hundreds of meatpacking, farm workers sign up for \\$600 assistance program](#)

Iowa Public Radio, December 26, 2022

[California workers get new protections in 2023. Here's what you need to know](#)

Los Angeles Times, January 3, 2023

Research Articles

No applicable research articles published in the past month



READ THE NCFH [COVID-19 IMPACT ON AGRICULTURAL WORKERS FACT SHEET!](#)

THIS FACT SHEET IS UPDATED QUARTERLY TO BRING THE MOST CURRENT INFORMATION ABOUT THE PANDEMIC'S IMPACT ON AGRICULTURAL WORKERS.