

Health Education Farmworker Feedback Committee

Community-Based Promising Practice

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many organizations have focused on producing health education materials and social media messages to support communications about the rapid updates seen with the virus and COVID-19 vaccine guidelines. NCFH focuses on creating materials that are culturally and linguistically accessible to farmworker communities in the U.S. The promising practice describes the formation process of a Farmworker Committee that focuses on providing feedback on materials produced by NCFH.

Partner:

The [National Center for Farmworker Health](#) (NCFH), based in Buda, TX is a private, not-for-profit corporation dedicated to improving the health status of farmworker families. NCFH provides information services, training and technical assistance, and a variety of products to community and migrant health centers nationwide, as well as organizations, universities, researchers, and individuals involved in farmworker health.



Description of the Practice:

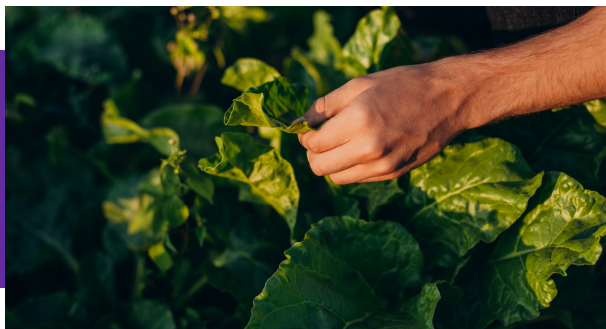
At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, accessing farmworker-friendly health education materials to conduct outreach and education activities became an evident challenge, namely due to language barriers as much of the material published was in English. The information available in Spanish, the language spoken by the majority of farmworkers in the U.S. (JBS International, 2018), was often difficult to find, was not in an accessible format for farmworkers, or was not timely. This led NCFH to work together with network organizations and other farmworker-serving organizations in the development of new resources. The process included the formation of a Farmworker Feedback Committee to review and provide feedback on health education resources created by NCFH, which has been instrumental in making material suitable for farmworker audiences. The committee of farmworkers was trained by NCFH to provide critical feedback on the language, content, and formatting of health education materials during their development process.

Key Strategies:

Committee Formation: The Farmworker Feedback Committee is currently comprised of six members with diverse backgrounds who meet the following criteria: a) Have former or current work experience as a farmworker in the U.S.; b) Speak Spanish. To ensure a diversity of perspectives, other qualifying characteristics include speaking a Mesoamerican Indigenous language, participation in the H-2A guest worker program, gender, and country of origin to ensure that each member can provide feedback on cultural aspects included in the health education materials. All Farmworker Feedback Committee members receive a brief orientation on how critical their feedback is to NCFH, how it is used, and how they can share their feedback.

NCFH recruited committee members through outreach interactions with farmworkers and referrals from partner organizations.

Feedback Process: After NCFH has created a new health education material, an NCFH team member communicates with the Farmworker Feedback Committee through the WhatsApp text application. Farmworker committee members receive a copy of the material, a short description, and a set of questions to accurately gather information on the clarity of the messaging, overall design and illustrations, and cultural and linguistic suggestions. Questions are modified according to each type of material and content. Farmworkers can provide feedback via a phone call, video call, text message, or audio recording. As feedback comes in, NCFH team members collect all responses in a Microsoft Word form and save them in a shared cloud location. The Health Education project lead reviews feedback and incorporates suggested changes into the material. Figure 1 below illustrates correspondence in the WhatsApp application chat to review materials.



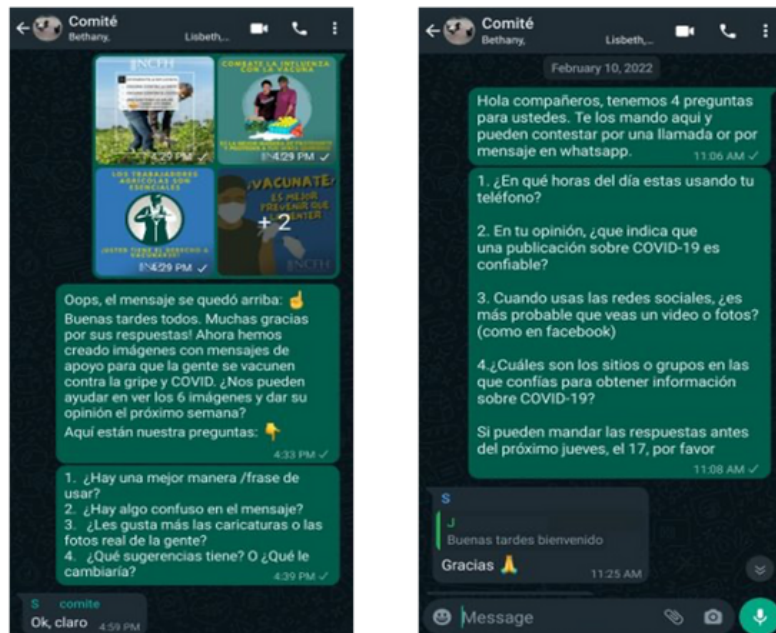


Figure 1: Example of communications with Farmworker Committee

Key Challenges and How They Were Addressed:

Retention & Engagement

Working remotely with farmworkers has been challenging, especially because their work hours can be long, their personal commitments and events such as weather or travel may limit their responsiveness. For this reason, the NCFH Communications Team has designated a staff member to coordinate and maintain communication with committee members at least twice a month. When there are materials to be reviewed, committee members are asked to review specific resources and respond to a specific set of questions. When there are no materials for review, the coordinator engages with committee members through WhatsApp group chat or individual chats to learn how they are doing in their personal and work lives. Without regular communications, farmworker members may fall out of the committee, so personal check-ins help form a collegial relationship between the coordinator and committee members. The committee coordinator communicates in a personable and sensitive way, but is also professional, flexible, and able to frame expectations and deadlines.



Farmworkers Schedules

One important consideration when working with farmworkers on health education material review is to understand and respect their work schedules. Farmworkers' work is physically demanding, and they usually don't have the time or the energy to work additional hours during the evening to provide feedback on materials. Therefore, the committee coordinator has established that the Farmworker Feedback Committee needs a minimum of seven days to review and provide feedback on a specific health education material. The committee members provide their input via phone calls, video calls, text, or audio messages, according to their preferred method of communication.

Resources Needed and Expenses:

Payment:

Adequate compensation is crucial when collaborating with the farmworker community. Their time, input, and resources used to review health education resources for a wider audience of farmworkers is deeply insightful and compensated through a monthly stipend of \$300 per individual, with an estimated time commitment of 4-8 hours per month.

The bilingual coordinator of the Farmworker Feedback Committee has a designated role within the Communications Team at NCFH, who works to coordinate feedback and communications with committee members. This person prepares materials that need to be adapted to share via phone and prepares instructions and questions about the materials for review. After that, the coordinator compiles information through the preferred method of communication of committee members such as video calls, phone calls, text, or audio messages. Lastly, the coordinator compiles information, transcribes, addresses feedback received, and processes payments.



Accessibility:

Each committee member lives in the U.S. or Mexico and has internet access through a cell phone. NCFH staff and committee members communicate through WhatsApp, an instant messaging application that allows international users to chat, create group texts, share photos and videos and documents, and engage in private conversations. The group usually communicates at least twice a month and is provided a minimum of 7 days to provide comments and suggestions on any given health education material for review.

Partners:

Farmworker Feedback Committee members:

- Jacobo Pérez Diaz
- Silvia Esteban
- Paulina Yamileth Galindo Ávila
- Saul Rojas Gonzales
- Nicolas Garcia Mirabal
- Diego Sanchez Sanchez

Evaluation: Data Collected and Results

Resources reviewed by the Farmworker Feedback Committee between October 2021 and September 2022 include:

- 8 flyers
- 1 video resource
- 13 scripts for audio resources
- 2 illustrations



Lessons Learned:

- Make a plan and be flexible. Coordinating a Farmworker Feedback Committee can be time-consuming, but it's easier when there is a plan to coordinate feedback activities. It's good to be professional, but it's key to be flexible and understanding because there are many situations in the lives of farmworkers that are outside of their control that may make their responses be slow. Being flexible in every aspect of the process has been a crucial lesson learned amid an evolving pandemic.
- Communication is key. Keeping clear expectations when working with farmworkers on a committee has been fundamental, but it's also been important to have a more personal communication with them. This allows them to share about different difficulties they face and for staff to understand ways to support them. Friendly communication helps exchanging honest opinions, which are essential for this type of work, as well as keeping farmworkers engaged and interested in the committee.



Pro Tip:

Getting feedback from the target audience is key when developing health educational materials. This exercise ensures that materials are relevant, realistic, and that address their most urgent concerns.

A farmworker committee is easier to form when relationships have been established, communication is sensitive, flexible, and professional, and when there is sufficient compensation to encourage participation and constructive feedback.

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