

Mobilizing an Emergency Response for Agricultural Workers

Migratory and Seasonal Agricultural Workers (MSAW) are an integral part of the community and the U.S. economy. They work in agriculture by harvesting crops, tending to livestock, and processing agricultural products, either on a migratory or seasonal basis. Despite doing essential work, MSAWs face multiple barriers when accessing health care and social services, including poverty, frequent moves or changes in residency, low literacy, limited English proficiency (LEP), varied beliefs and customs about health that can make it difficult to navigate the U.S. health care system.¹ These factors make MSAWs more vulnerable to emergencies such as natural disasters and national emergencies.

This adapted guide describes how to mobilize an emergency response for MSAWs through the following three key steps:

1. Identify and locate MSAWs during emergencies.
2. Develop a communication strategy.
3. Collaborate with community partners for outreach and resources.²

Follow these steps for effective emergency preparedness planning and implementation with MSAW communities:



Step 1: Identify and Locate MSAW Communities

The first step in an emergency is to identify who and where MSAWs may be affected. You can gather demographic information such as their country of origin, age, education, employment, and income. Having this information before an actual emergency occurs would be ideal, but if not, gather it as soon as possible to customize your outreach and messaging for this specific population. These tools can be used to identify and locate MSAW communities and emergency events in an area:

- [National Center for Farmworker Health \(NCFH\) Farm Labor Data Dashboard](#): This interactive, web-based tool allows you to view estimates of MSAWs in your county, state, and/or across the nation. The Data Dashboard also provides:
 - o **Population Estimates**: It allows you to view seasonal fluctuations of MSAWs in your area, concentrations of H-2A workers, the number of MSAW dependents, and the total number of estimated MSAWs in a specific region.
 - o **Types of Agricultural Work**: It provides information on the type of agricultural industry, the seasonality of the workforce, and employer contract information.
 - o **Mapping Features**: It identifies federally funded health centers nationwide as well as the locations of H-2A work sites and MSAW housing sites.
 - o **Farmworker Community Resources**: It identifies community resources in the area that are MSAW-focused.
- [OnTheMap for Emergency Management](#): This interactive map provides a live list of emergency events, their locations, and the number of people affected.
- [National Farmworker Jobs Program Offices](#): This webpage from the U.S. Department of Labor provides information about the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) and directs users to resources for locating programs in their area.



Step 2: Develop a Communications Strategy

Once you have identified and located MSAWs in your area, the next step is to develop a messaging and communications strategy to reach this community quickly and effectively, especially during an emergency or disaster.

- MSAWs are a community with varied linguistic needs, beliefs, and traditions.³ Questions to consider as you develop your communications strategy include:
- Are MSAWs in your area able to understand written or spoken English? If not, has information been translated into their native or preferred language?
- Will you need the support of interpreters?
- What communication channels does this population use to receive and share information?

- [Effective Communication with MSAW During National Emergencies](#): This NCFH resource informs health centers and other farmworker-serving organizations about the challenges MSAWs face during national emergencies, and how to initiate effective emergency communications with this population. (Also available in [Spanish](#))
- [Effective Communication with Limited English Proficiency \(LEP\) MSAWs During National Emergencies](#): This NCFH resource provides information on LEP MSAWs, ways national emergencies affect them, and tips to improve emergency response and communication efforts with this population. (Also available in [Spanish](#))
- [Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Materials](#): This website from Ready.gov offers free preparedness materials, hazard information sheets, and other tools in various languages from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). They also have an inventory of Preparedness Videos in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).



Step 3: Collaborate with Community Partners

After developing your communication strategy, the third step is to disseminate emergency information through outreach, in addition to digital and radio communications. The key to successful outreach is to identify partners who have built trust with MSAWs in your community, can offer services and support during an emergency, and who can play an active role in your emergency response plan. MSAWs may lack the following during an emergency: access to basic items such as food, water, and shelter; access to healthcare, treatment of chronic conditions, and medication; access to transportation or public transit; access to accurate information and communications given loss of power; and access to disaster assistance/relief. Given these possible limitations, consider collaborating with community partners that could help mitigate these barriers, such as health centers, health departments, community-based organizations, small community businesses, churches and other faith-based organizations, libraries, schools, childcare providers, etc.



After establishing a network of partnerships, it is important to sustain it through ongoing communication, consistent meetings, and action planning. Develop a plan for working together during an emergency response:

1. Arrange consistent meetings for ongoing discussions.
2. Develop formal agreements or memorandum of understanding (MOU) if needed.
3. Identify roles each organization would take before, during, and after an emergency. Be sure to include representatives of the MSAW community in your discussions and emergency preparedness planning.
4. Integrate partners into emergency drills/exercises.
5. Involve partners in emergency preparedness and response trainings.
6. Assess community needs and identify new available resources.
7. Re-evaluate and modify emergency plans as needed on an ongoing basis.

Collaborate with community partners who can help you address the needs of MSAWs during a crisis!

These partners could help you share information through common ways of reaching MSAWs, including telephone calls or text messages, digital channels such as chat applications like WhatsApp, social media platforms like Facebook, or in-person outreach with trusted community members or leaders. Community Health Workers (CHWs) have strong connections with the MSAW population and are often the first line of communication within the community, ensuring accurate and up-to-date information about public health emergencies. CHWs may already be members of the community themselves, have established relationships, and know the population's needs and challenges.

The tools below can be used to identify community organizations for partnership:

- [NCFH MSAW-Serving Organizations](#): Offers a list of community-based organizations whose primary mission is to serve MSAWs and their families.
- [CDC Health Department Directories](#): Offers a list of public health officials, state, local, and territorial health departments, and Tribes and Tribe Organizations.
- [Mexican Consulates](#): Includes the addresses and phone numbers of Mexico's consulates in the United States.
- [FEMA Disaster Assistance](#): Provides information on available assistance programs for individuals in disaster recovery.
- [Rural Emergency Preparedness and Response](#): Provides resources and contact information from federal, state, and local organizations.
- [Outreach and Community Health Workers in Health Center Emergency Preparedness and Management](#): This tip sheet focuses on how outreach workers and CHWs can support the basic emergency management expectations for health centers.
- [Migrant Education Program Offices](#): This interactive map provides State Program Contacts and regional representatives for Migrant Education Program.
- [Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Offices](#): This interactive map allows you to locate a Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program near you.
- [Legal Aid Services Directory](#): This list provides information about where to find legal services in states across the country.



Additional Emergency Preparedness Resources

The resources below offer additional information and considerations for emergency planning and response efforts to better meet the needs of the MSAW patients you serve:

- [Emergency Preparedness and Agricultural Workers](#): This resource describes different emergencies, why MSAWs are vulnerable during disasters, the potential effects of emergencies and disasters on health centers, and ways to implement emergency preparedness and management.
- [Strategies for Emergency Management of Chronic Conditions Among Agricultural Workers](#): This resource provides health center staff, clinical coordinators, and emergency managers with tools to support MSAW patients with chronic conditions.
- [Ag Safety FactSheet: Emergency Preparedness for Farmworkers](#): This factsheet from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) outlines MSAW safety to lessen the impact of unexpected emergencies and disasters on farms.
- [Keeping Workers Safe during Disaster Cleanup and Recovery](#): This OSHA factsheet describes hazards posed by natural disasters and provides precautions for employers and workers.
- [Migratory and Seasonal Farm Workers Emergency Preparedness Planning Guide | National Rural Health Association](#): This guide provides actionable steps for public health professionals pre-event, during the event, and post-event, considering how the type of emergency will affect the response.
- [Relief and Recovery on the Frontlines of Disaster](#): This rapid response toolkit provides information for organizations on responding to extreme weather events.
- [Keep Food and Water Safe After a Disaster](#): This webpage outlines steps to take to prevent illness from unsafe food during a disaster or emergency.
- [Clean Up Safely After a Disaster](#): This webpage outlines steps to take to protect yourself and your loved ones during cleanup after a natural disaster. (Available in [Spanish](#))



Implement these steps and use these tools to better plan and mobilize an emergency response for MSAWs today!

*Adapted from the National Center for Farmworker Health's resource,
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