

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
AGRICULTURAL SERVICES OUTREACH PLAN
PROGRAM YEAR 2011**

Wagner-Peyser Labor Exchange Services

I. Summary Overview

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) will assist the Regional Workforce Boards in operating an outreach and employment program for migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs) in accordance with Title I of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the Wagner-Peyser (WP) Act regulations at 20 CFR Parts 652 and 653. Full-time, year-round outreach worker positions are assigned to conduct outreach activities in the significant MSFW areas in order to accomplish the maximum penetration into the farmworker population. Additionally, designated One-Stop Career Centers will utilize other agency staff and volunteer workers to inform farmworkers of the services available. The outreach services network is further supported by the State Monitor Advocate who conducts on-site monitoring of Florida's significant offices to ensure that an equitable and appropriate level of services is provided to the farmworker community.

II. Assessment of Need

Florida is the nation's leading citrus producer and is ranked first for sales of a number of vegetable and specialty crops. In the 2009-2010 citrus season, Florida farmworkers were responsible for harvesting 554,037 acres of citrus trees.¹ Farmworkers also harvested approximately 224,000 acres of vegetable crops² and 392,000 acres of sugarcane in 2009.³ Cash receipts for all crops totaled \$6 billion, compared to \$6.5 billion in 2008 and \$6.7 billion in 2007.⁴ Some pre-harvest activities such as planting, transplanting, tying, staking and pruning are also performed by farmworkers, as well as post-harvest activities such as packing and juice processing. Citrus, vegetables, sugarcane and nursery crops comprise Florida's major agricultural commodities. Broken down, citrus is the major crop activity with oranges leading the way followed by grapefruit and other specialty fruits (tangerines, limes, etc.). Tomatoes lead the way in vegetable production followed by sweet corn, bell peppers, cabbage, cucumbers, snap beans and squash. Other special commodities include potatoes, watermelons, strawberries and blueberries. Polk County leads in the production of oranges; Indian River and St. Lucie in the production of grapefruit; Manatee in the production of tomatoes; Palm Beach in the production of

¹ Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Agricultural Statistics Service

² Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Annual Report 2009-2010

³ U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2010 State Agriculture Overview; Florida

⁴ University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, *Florida Statistical Abstract 2010*

sugarcane and fresh sweet corn; and Dade in the production of fresh snap beans, squash and tropical fruits.⁵

The following is a breakdown of Florida's top major labor-intensive crop activity during the 2009-2010 season.

CROP		USUAL HARVESTING DATES		PRIMARY GEOGRAPHICAL AREA OF ACTIVITY	LABOR POOL
		Begin	Most Active		
Citrus	Oranges	Mid-September	September - June	Polk, Hendry, DeSoto, Highlands, Hardee, Collier, St. Lucie, Manatee, Indian River, Martin, Charlotte, Lee, Lake, Hillsborough, Osceola, Glades, Pasco, Okeechobee	60,000
	Grapefruit	September	September - June	Indian River, St. Lucie, Polk, Hendry, Highlands, Collier, Charlotte, Osceola, Okeechobee, Lake	12,000
	Specialty	June	June - April	Polk, Lake, Hendry, Highlands, St. Lucie, Indian River, Hardee, Collier, De Soto	8,000
Vegetables	Tomatoes	Mid-October	November - May	Manatee, Collier, Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, Hendry, Gadsden, Hamilton	10,500
	Sweet Corn	Mid-September	November - May	Palm Beach, Miami-Dade, Hendry, Orange	3,100
	Bell Peppers	Mid-October	November - April	Palm Beach, Collier, Hillsborough, Manatee	5,000
	Cabbage	Mid-October	January - April	Flagler, St. Johns, Palm Beach, Manatee	1,500
	Cucumbers	Mid-September	November - April	Manatee, Palm Beach, Hillsborough, Collier, Hardee, Hendry, Miami-Dade	1,500
	Snap Beans	Mid-October	November - April	Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, Suwannee, Hendry, Alachua, Jackson	5,000
	Squash	September	November - May	Miami-Dade, Collier, Lee, Hillsborough, Gadsden, Jackson	2,500
	Potatoes	Mid-December	February - May	St. Johns, Putnam, Flagler, Okeechobee, Suwannee	2,800
	Watermelons	April	May - June	Hendry, Levy, Gilchrist, Highlands, Collier, Suwannee, DeSoto, Alachua, Manatee, Marion, Hardee, Jackson, Sumter	2,500
	Strawberries	Mid-December	February - March	Hillsborough	5,000
	Blueberries	March	March - May	Polk, Alachua, Hardee, Hamilton	4,000
	Sugarcane	November	November - February	Palm Beach, Hendry, Glades, Martin	3,500

Data obtained from both internal and external agencies and organizations such as One-Stop Career Centers, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service, Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation, outreach workers, farm worker organizations, etc. Additional data was obtained from agency reports.

⁵ Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Agricultural Statistics Service

The transient nature of seasonal farmworkers makes it difficult to develop accurate and consistent estimates of Florida farmworker numbers and farmworker numbers in the state are largely dictated by the extent of agricultural activity in an area. The peak number of MSFWs working in Florida during Program Year 2010 was estimated to be 116,530.

Florida has experienced lower than normal yields over the last two seasons because of record cold temperatures, natural disasters and diseases. These factors, especially the freezing temperatures in the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 winter seasons, have destroyed large amounts of vegetable crops and a significant amount of oranges. Many crops were delayed by the cold weather, which affected available employment opportunities. Also, the 2010-2011 harvest experienced some labor shortages due to strict immigration laws passed in Georgia and concern on the part of the MSFW population that a similar law might pass in Florida.

Citrus and vegetable production is expected to be slightly higher for the 2011-2012 picking season, if not affected by natural disasters and extreme temperatures. The agriculture labor pool in general is expected to be lower this year, evidenced by an increase in the number of employers using the H-2A Temporary Non-Immigrant Alien Agricultural Worker Program. Several employers in industries where labor was always filled by MSFWs, such as tomatoes and blueberries, are now finding a need to obtain foreign workers to fill harvesting positions.

III. Outreach Activities

The main objective of the Department and its partner outreach programs is to actively locate and contact those MSFWs who may not be reached through normal intake activities conducted at One-Stop Career Centers. In making contact with MSFWs, outreach workers will explain the services offered and the types of training and employment opportunities available, provide information on protections and rights of MSFWs, as well as provide information regarding other organizations that provide services to MSFWs. Staff performing outreach will, whenever possible, be bilingual and have a MSFW background or be a member of a minority group representative of the MSFW population.

To accomplish the maximum level of outreach activities, a full-time year-round outreach worker position will be assigned to each designated significant One-Stop Career Center. Outreach workers will specifically be assigned to areas where there is significant agricultural activity and where a large number of job applicants are MSFWs. Outreach workers trained in the recruitment and provision of services will be available directly through the significant One-Stop Career Center network. The Department will consider and be sensitive to the

preferences, needs and skills of individual MSFWs and the availability of jobs and training opportunities.

Outreach will be accomplished through personal contacts, printed material, the media, community involvement and cooperative ventures with private and public agencies. Outreach workers will make personal contacts with MSFWs on a daily basis to explain the services available through the One-Stop Career Centers and other agencies. Outreach workers will visit sites where farmworkers live and gather, including pickup points, migrant health clinics and locations where social services are provided, in order to contact the maximum number of MSFWs possible. Flyers and other printed materials will be distributed at these locations to maximize penetration into the farmworker community. Follow-up contacts will be made with MSFWs to help ensure that needs have been met and to determine if any other assistance can be provided. The Department and its partners will continue to establish new linkages and use existing relationships with local and statewide networks to solicit information and suggestions from appropriate public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other groups representing and advocating on behalf of MSFWs.

Processing applications and assessment and placement of MSFWs will be emphasized to assist in year-round employment. In completing applications, a full description of the work history will be made to assess the MSFWs' knowledge and skill level. Should demand or organizational considerations require, other trained staff would be made available to assist in service delivery. Collaboration will be made with WIA Section 167 grantees to maximize training opportunities.

Outreach workers are fully trained in all aspects of employment-related services to MSFWs, including taking complaints while in the field. Further, staff who observe, have reason to believe or are in receipt of information pertaining to an apparent violation of employment-related laws are required to document and refer the suspected violation to the One-Stop Career Center Manager, who is required to follow established procedures in resolving such allegations.

Outreach activities will be documented on the Log of Daily Outreach Activities. The log form includes the number of MSFWs contacted, the amount of time expended, the services provided and information on complaints received. All outreach workers will utilize standard forms such as the job application, complaint forms and logs of apparent violations. Monthly reports that summarize all outreach efforts and activities will be submitted to the Florida Monitor Advocate. These reports will include an analysis of the outreach activities performed by the outreach worker on a qualitative and quantitative basis and a summary of the total One-Stop Career Center outreach effort. Monitoring of the outreach activities will be conducted to assess and report on the parity of services provided.

There are currently nine Regional Workforce Boards designated as significant MSFW locations in Florida. Within those regions, there are ten One-Stop Career Centers designated as significant bilingual sites in Florida, which is an increase from prior years. During PY 2009, Heartland Workforce Investment Board (Region 19) hired an additional outreach staff for their Wauchula One-Stop Career Center. Each significant office is assigned a full-time year-round outreach worker.

Florida will continue to operate its ten designated significant MSFW One-Stop Career Centers during PY 2011. Following is a list of the nine Regional Workforce Development Boards and the ten MSFW significant One-Stop Career Centers for PY 2011, along with corresponding outreach data.

Significant/Bilingual Office Location	Regional Workforce Board	# of Assigned FTE Positions	# of MSFW Outreach Contacts	# of Staff Days
Quincy	Region 5	1	1,100	210
Plant City	Region 15	1	1,850	210
Winter Haven	Region 17	1	1,350	210
Bradenton	Region 18	1	1,950	210
Sebring/ Wauchula	Region 19	2	1,900	210
Port Saint Lucie	Region 20	1	1,250	210
Belle Glade	Region 21	1	1,350	210
Homestead	Region 23	1	1,400	210
Immokalee	Region 24	1	1,700	210
Total		10	13,850	1,638

At the state level, planned MSFW outreach contacts will be based in part on accomplishments during the prior program year and estimated number of MSFWs in the state. Florida only reports “quality” outreach contacts made with MSFWs, meaning a contact where a reportable supportive service is provided and documented. Florida made 15,335 quality contacts in PY 2009; however, only 10,671 quality contacts were made in PY 2010. This is due to inclement weather patterns, poor crop conditions and an outreach worker position vacancy. As a result of the crop delay and damage caused by the winter freezes, some farmworkers migrated to other states earlier than usual. During PY 2011, Florida plans to make approximately 13,850 contacts. To maintain service levels, outreach services will be supplemented to the extent possible.

Cooperative agreements with other public and private social service agencies, such as WIA Section 167 grantees, will be established in order to provide joint outreach efforts to the MSFW population. Approximately 500 additional contacts will be made via nonfinancial agreements with cooperating agencies and those One-Stop Career Centers having some agricultural activity and food processing employment, but do not meet the ten percent criteria for the significant One-Stop Career Center designation.

The MSFW outreach workers will maintain a continuing relationship with all community groups, public agencies and advocacy groups interested in the welfare of farmworkers. Contact will be made with agricultural employers for possible job openings, and the outreach workers will assist One-Stop Career Center staff with recruiting MSFWs for those specific job orders. Penetration rates into the statewide MSFW population through outreach are established on a contact per position basis (minimum five quality contacts per day) based on previous performance and MSFW population totals.

IV. Services Provided to MSFWs through the One-Stop Delivery System

Florida ensures that all Regional Workforce Boards and One-Stop Career Centers serve all applicants, including MSFWs. Bilingual staff are available at all significant centers as well as many other centers across the state. In the One-Stop Career Center network, staff are trained on the assistance needs of MSFWs. As part of the registration process, customers will be identified as MSFWs at the initial point of contact/intake and provided with a verbal and written explanation of services available in English, Spanish or Creole. A MSFW desk aide is available to all staff to assist in identifying MSFWs.

Services including core and intensive services will be provided as necessary. The MSFWs' knowledge, skills and abilities will be assessed to determine appropriate jobs to which they may be referred. Job referrals will be provided through mass recruitments, H-2A job referrals and job developments. Staff will also suggest training programs that would best serve the needs of those who are not job ready. Referrals will be made to local WIA Section 167 training programs, local board training programs and housing assistance agencies. Staff will also be familiar with and refer MSFWs appropriately to other community supportive services.

The State Monitor Advocate will conduct quality assurance visits to all significant offices on an annual basis to ensure that MSFWs have equal access to employment opportunities through Florida's One-Stop delivery system.

Note: In accordance with 20 CFR 652.111, Florida has been exempt from developing an Affirmative Action Plan due to the high number of bilingual staff in the significant One-Stop Career Centers.

V. Services Provided to Agricultural Employers through the One-Stop Delivery System

Florida ensures that all One-Stop Career Centers assist all employers, including agricultural employers, in filling job openings. To increase employer participation, links have been established with employers, employer councils and other employer groups to identify potential employers to establish a pool by which to refer MSFWs. One-Stop Career Center staff in significant MSFW

centers will perform marketing outreach to growers, harvesters and processors. The One-Stop Career Centers will develop new employer contacts, maintain existing contacts and encourage job order creation through the local One-Stop Career Centers. State office staff will also promote labor exchange services to agriculture employers through participation at employer conferences and through the Department's website.

Identifying the needs of employers will continue to be a high priority. A coordinated marketing program will be used to deliver services to employers, and a proactive approach will be taken to assist employers in filling their job vacancies. Strategies that will be used to promote labor exchange services to agricultural employers include recruiting agreements, job fairs and new business relationships. Some of these efforts include advising worker advocates and groups through notifications of job orders in both English and Spanish; and providing notification to employers and advocates of any changes to foreign labor program requirements that affect workers. Increased use of the Internet will also enhance service delivery to both the employers and applicants.

A number of One-Stop Career Centers have agricultural recruiting agreements with large employers in an effort to place more MSFWs in job opportunity situations. Mass recruitment agreements are offered to agricultural employers at the beginning of a season or when large pools of labor are needed. These agreements can include services such as marketing, prescreening, referral, and completion of applications and I-9 documents.

As noted earlier, more agricultural employers are using the H-2A Temporary Non-Immigrant Alien Agricultural Worker Program. The state office provides assistance to these employers. H-2A job orders are entered by DEO's Foreign Labor Certification Office. During PY 2010, the Department processed 51 H-2A applications and job orders for Florida employers. This number has already increased for PY 2011. As a result, the state has been required to conduct increased pre-occupancy housing inspections, prevailing wage surveys and on-site recruitment. The Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) is an alternative to the H-2A program that will be offered to employers who have temporary agricultural or food processing jobs and are in need of workers.

State and local staff participate in recruitment efforts with Florida employers and farmworker organizations to recruit domestic workers. Coordinating activities with farmworker groups will maintain dialogue on job and worker availability to help increase U.S. worker participation. One-Stop Career Centers in significant agricultural areas will be provided copies of approved clearance orders that will provide all staff, including outreach workers, with current information on job availability to assist in these efforts. One-Stop Career Centers will be provided information on out-of-state clearance orders that workers find on the state system, Employ Florida Marketplace (EFM). Domestic farmworker crews, family

groups and individuals will also be recruited and referred to agricultural employers who submit job orders in agricultural occupations.

VI. State Monitor Advocate Review and Public Comment

Florida has a full-time State Monitor Advocate who has been afforded the opportunity to formulate the PY 2011 Agricultural Services Outreach Plan. All comments, suggestions and recommendations of the Monitor Advocate have been incorporated in the plan, as well as any received from the farmworker communities, the local and state (Workforce Florida, Inc.) workforce boards and other interested parties.

My signature is affixed to this plan to verify the review and incorporation of any and all comments received.

Marisela Ruiz, Senior Monitor Advocate