# Best Practices for COVID-19 Response in Rural Farmworker Populations

## Latino ⇄ Farmworker

Latinos are diverse group composed of different cultures, languages, and occupations. In the U.S., 80% of farmworkers identify as Latino/Hispanic. This subset is particularly vunerable to exploitative worker contracts and low pay. One third of Latinos are immigrants. They may be living in the U.S. with a visa, refugee status, or without documentation. Thus presenting unique health and safety challenges.

### Types of Farmworkers

| Resident | H-2A | Migrant |
|---|---|---|
| • Lives in the county they work. <br> • May have full time contract with the farm, work independently during harvest, or as a day-laborer. <br> • Most do not have health insurance through employer. | • May stay in one location or travel during 6-8 month contract. <br> • Dorm-style housing, food, travel, and health costs are guaranteed in contract. <br> • Legal protections in case they are unable to work. | • Independently contracted. <br> • Mixed legal statuses. <br> • Low pay, with minimal legal protections. <br> • No health insurance, no sick leave, no vacation. <br> • *Highly vulnerable population* |

## Farmworker safety is community safety

It is important to recognize that farmworkers must navigate numerous social, political, and economic challenges in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The resolution of safety concerns will require collaboration between farms, community agencies, and health departments.

### Top safety concerns among Latino farmworkers

- *Confidentiality and the sharing of information with Immigration Enforcement (ICE) officials*
- Loss of employment and/or housing due to quarantine requirements
- Inability to migrate with work team
- Retaliation from employer or other employees if tested positive
- Farm owners unwilling to adopt prevention measures
- *Racial targeting and unrest in the U.S.*

## Actions to improve COVID-19 prevention 😷

**Step 1 Anticipate**: Engage farms, farm owners, contractors and crew leaders to ensure farmworker safety, and improve compliance with testing, self-quarantine, and contact tracing.

**Step 2 Preparation:** Identify languages spoken by farmworkers to ensure adequate multilingual staff. Locate pop-up testing sites on farms or near worker housing. Offer testing after work hours.

**Step 3 Testing**: Be clear in communicating the testing process, including how many days it will take to process results, prevention concepts, what will happen if tested positive, and contact tracing procedures and rationale. Be prepared to provide an employer work letter for those cleared to return to work or if requiring quarantine.

**Step 4 Managing Results**: Take a harm-reduction approach to testing and tracing by meeting the community where they are. Minimize the quantity of information collected (name, phone number) and adapt contact tracing procedures to ease safety concerns. Coordinate housing and food for vulnerable community members.

**Step 5 Partnership:** Partner with community organizations that serve farmworker populations to address additional legal and social needs.

## Additional Resources

- **Culturally-appropriate COVID-19 Tips In Spanish:** http://rwhp.org/covid-19-tips.html
- **CDC Guidance for Agricultural Workers and Employers**: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-agricultural-workers.html
- **COVID-19 Information in Indigenous Languages:** https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LrbRMvo8A7uv-GMIMfUwS4Do8OWoBKrKpkngeG7xeMg/edit

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