
**CareerSource Heartland – Local Workforce Development Area 19
(LWDA 19)**

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) Outreach Plan

Program Years 2020 – 2024

A. Assessment of Need

CareerSource Heartland – LWDA 19 has been determined a MSFW significant area with one designated significant multilingual MSFW career center located in Wauchula in Hardee County. Prior to that, CareerSource Heartland – LWDA 19 had two significant multilingual MSFW career centers – one located in Wauchula and one in Sebring (Highlands County). Significant multilingual MSFW career centers are centers where 10 percent or more of the MSFW participants are estimated to require service provision in a language(s) other than English. The career center in Sebring did not meet the 10 percent requirement of MSFW participants for this MSFW Outreach Plan period, therefore, the MSFW significant center designation was removed.

According to the Florida Citrus Statistics 2018-2019 report, three of the top five citrus producing counties in the State – DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands - are located within LWDA 19. DeSoto County comes in at number one, with Highlands County in third and Hardee County at number five. The five top counties account for 71 percent of the state's total citrus production. Oranges constituted 93 percent of the citrus production, grapefruit accounted for six percent, with tangerines and tangelos representing one percent.

Due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic, consumer demand for orange juice is up; however, the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service projects a decrease in production of all Florida citrus varieties compared to previous years.

The effects of several devastating hurricanes, along with citrus greening, has proven instrumental in lowering citrus production across the state and in our four county LWDA. In addition, the number of acreages growing citrus has decreased across the state and in our local area, as groves have been cleared and the land utilized for other non-agricultural purposes.

Vegetable productions are major labor-intensive crops in LWDA 19. These include strawberries, blueberries, and watermelons, followed by potatoes and cucumbers.

The nursery industry is also an important commodity to LWDA 19's agricultural industry. Although many workers are employed year-round, this workforce is important to quantify for purposes of determining housing, education, training, and social service needs of our farmworker population.

According to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), Bureau of Workforce Statistics & Economic Research, *Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse* jobs are predicted to decrease 6.8% between 2020 and 2028.

The state's agriculture labor pool is already expected to be lower this year, evidenced by trends from previous seasons and an increase in the number of employers using H-2A Temporary Non-immigrant

Agricultural Worker Visa Programs. The same is expected in LWDA 19. H-2A job orders increased in LWDA 19 by 10% from 2019 to 2020 and open H-2A positions increased by 18%. In addition, the impacts of COVID-19 are heavily affecting the migrant labor pool. Many farmworkers are staying in place as COVID-19 regulations require quarantine upon arrival in some of the states they would normally travel to work. Some farmworkers are moving into other labor jobs and only working in farm work seasonally.

Harvesting season for early oranges is from September through March with Valencia oranges season running from January through June. Grapefruit is from September through June and tangerines and tangelos are from September through April. During the peak season, September – June, there is an estimated labor pool of 1,090 workers in LWDA 19, with an estimated 900 during the off season. The labor pool appears to be declining due to immigration issues and the COVID-19 pandemic.

MSFWs need affordable housing that is not substandard, access to public transportation, health insurance coverage, language barrier assistance, access to affordable health care including behavioral health, and safer working conditions in a COVID-19 environment.

Agricultural employers are challenged with finding domestic job applicants who meet the qualifications for the available positions. Many have turned to the H-2A program to find sufficient workers to harvest their crops. The advent of COVID-19 has further exacerbated this need as it seems fewer MSFWs are traveling due to COVID restrictions and the fear of quarantine.

B. Assessment of Available Resources

CareerSource Heartland career center staff works in conjunction with the MSFW Outreach staff to provide referrals to employment opportunities, job training, and referrals to supportive services for those MSFWs hindered by seasonal unemployment and/or underemployment. All MSFWs are provided with a copy of the *Services to MSFWs through Career Centers* (DEO-511N) form in their native language (available in English, Spanish, and Creole). The form contains information on DEO's toll-free Farmworker Helpline for farmworkers who may want to file a complaint, report an apparent violation, or obtain employment service information.

Career Center staff will:

- Provide and review a copy of the DEO-511N form in their native language (available in English, Spanish, and Creole);
- Assist with a full registration in Employ Florida or update an existing registration;
- Conduct assessments of the MSFWs employment history, crops, education, desired employment and training, interests, and skills, that result in the identification of employment goals, barriers to employment and supportive services needed to obtain those goals;
- Provide information on the kinds of jobs that are available;
- Provide assistance with job search;
- Provide access to testing as needed or required;
- Provide career guidance or counseling;
- Provide Labor Market Information;
- Provide referral to training opportunities, based on eligibility;
- Provide information on orientation and workshops available;
- Assist with complaint resolution about a career center or an employer;
- Provide information on farmworker rights and labor law information;

- Make referrals to supportive services, including childcare, medical/health, food assistance, transportation, and housing;
- Provide immediate referral to an agricultural job for a specific farm recruitment event; and
- Make referrals to other job opportunities (including non-agricultural).

Valuable resources available to MSFWs through Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with partner agencies include:

- School District of DeSoto County, Hardee County School Board, Indian River State College, and South Florida State College – Adult Education, Literacy, and ESOL.
- Agricultural and Labor Program, Inc. (ALPI) – serves as the designated Community Service Action Agency in Highlands County.
- LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) – services to help pay electrical bills.
- Manatee Community Action Agency, Inc. (MCAA) in Hardee and DeSoto counties – child development services and school readiness.
- Florida Department of Education Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with physical impairments in DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, and Okeechobee counties.

MOUs exist between CareerSource Heartland and the Farmworker Career Development Programs (FCDP) that describe the efforts to serve MSFWs in LWDA 19 through education and training, coordinated outreach efforts, and co-enrollment of FCDP and WIOA participants as applicable.

- South Florida State College FCDP – DeSoto, Hardee and Highlands Counties.
- Indian River State College FCDP – Okeechobee County.

Resources available through informal partnerships include:

- Florida Rural Legal Services – legal assistance.
- Department of Children & Families – SNAP and TANF programs.
- Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA), East Coast Migrant Head Start Programs (ESMHSP), and Early Learning Coalitions – child development and school readiness programs.
- Hardee Help Center, Cutting Edge Ministries, Manna Ministries, Catholic Charities, Church Service Center, and various thrift stores – food and clothing assistance.
- Health Departments and Central Florida Health Care – medical and dental assistance.
- Habitat for Humanity agencies, Country Manor Apartments, Avon Park Housing Authority, Hope Villa Apartments, Highlands Cove Apartments, and Florida Non-Profit Housing, Inc. – housing assistance.
- Peace River Center – domestic violence counseling and shelter.
- MV Transportation (Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinator) – community transportation assistance.

Resources available to all employers, including agricultural employers:

- Posting job orders,
- Applicant screening and referral of qualified candidates,
- Assessments and testing,
- Meeting facilities for interviewing,
- Current wage and Labor Market Information (LMI),

- Information on Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC),
- Specialized recruitment events and job fairs, and
- Assistance with reduction in workforce/layoffs.

MSFW Outreach staff communicate regularly by email, telephone, and/or in person with partners to ensure a seamless service delivery system, ensuring every client is treated fairly and with respect. All CareerSource Heartland workforce services are available to the MSFW population as required in 20 CFR, Part IV 651, 653, and 658, services for MSFWs.

C. Proposed Outreach Activities

1. CareerSource Heartland is dedicated to locating and contacting MSFWs who are not being reached by normal intake activities conducted by our career centers. With the designation of only one significant multilingual MSFW career center in January 2021, CareerSource Heartland will now have one full-time, year-round state merit staff performing outreach. MSFW Outreach staff has extensive experience in working with the MSFW population and a thorough knowledge of career center resources that are available to meet the specific needs of the MSFW customer and agricultural employers. MSFW Outreach staff is bi-lingual in English/Spanish and is approved for flex time (from normal daily work hours) as needed to accommodate the MSFWs and agriculture employers' daily schedules and seasonal harvest periods and to promote effective outreach activities. This flexibility enhances productivity and ensures that quality services are provided to the agricultural population.

MSFW Outreach staff is trained in the recruitment and provision of services and is available directly through the Wauchula career Center (Hardee County). The Wauchula career center is designated as a significant MSFW location, where there is significant agricultural activity and where large numbers of job applicants are MSFWs. It should be noted that although physically located in one of the counties in LWDA 19, MSFW Outreach activities are conducted in all four counties – DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, and Okeechobee counties – making up LWDA 19.

During the season, MSFW Outreach staff is expected to be out of the office approximately 80% of the time visiting establishments where farmworkers generally congregate. MSFW Outreach staff follow Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Florida Department of Health guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19. When possible, due to COVID-19, MSFW Outreach staff will perform virtual outreach services via phone, email, or text to MSFWs to assist with barriers preventing access to career center services. MSFW Outreach staff is required to have a minimum of eight MSFW quality contacts per workday. A quality contact is defined as an outreach contact with an MSFW where a reportable staff-assisted service is provided and documented.

MSFW Outreach staff provide support by ensuring MSFW customers receive the full range of career and training services, and other support services available to all other non-MSFW customers.

Virtual outreach worker activities include, but are not limited to:

- explaining services available at the career centers;
- referrals to training and employment opportunities;
- preparing applications for employment;

- referrals to supportive services, such as to food pantries, health clinics, and farmworker advocacy groups;
- explaining the Employment Service (ES) and Employment-Related Law Complaint System;
- assisting with filing ES complaints or apparent violations;
- making appointments and arranging transportation for MSFWs and members of their family to and from organizations;
- utilizing local media to share pertinent information on job opportunities, safety, and protections, as well as local services and advisories;
- conducting follow-up as necessary and appropriate; and
- providing a summary of farmworker rights, including rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

In-person outreach will also be accomplished, following CDC and Florida Department of Health guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19, through personal contacts, printed materials, the media, community involvement and cooperative ventures with private and public agencies. MSFW Outreach staff will make personal contacts with MSFWs to explain the services available through the career centers and other agencies, including:

- the availability of referrals to employment,
- training opportunities,
- supportive services,
- information on specific employment opportunities currently available, such as H-2A jobs and other low-skilled jobs,
- a basic summary of farmworker rights; and
- information on the employment service complaint system, including the Florida Farmworker Helpline.

MSFW Outreach staff will provide information in writing by way of the DEO Form 511N, which is available in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole. Additional materials provided during outreach include brochures outlining basic farmworker rights, and flyers or brochures from partner agencies outlining services available. MSFWs will be provided the location of the nearest career center and encouraged to visit the center to obtain the full range of employment and training services.

MSFW Outreach staff will make site visits, following CDC and Florida Department of Health guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19, where farmworkers live, work, and gather, including pickup points, mass recruitments and orientations, migrant health clinics, and locations where social services are provided, to contact the maximum number of MSFWs possible. Posters and other printed materials will be distributed at these locations, as available and determined appropriate, to maximize penetration into the farmworker community. Follow-up contacts will be made with MSFWs, as appropriate, to help ensure that needs have been met and to determine if any other assistance can be provided.

MSFW Outreach staff is responsible for reporting any apparent violations observed while in the field. CareerSource Heartland 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.

2. MSFW Outreach staff spends time in the farmworker community, ensuring the MSFW job seekers are aware of the full range of resources and funds available through cooperative agreements with, and presentation to, the public, private, and faith-based community service agencies and other groups interested in the welfare of farmworkers. Contact will be made with agricultural employers for possible job openings, and MSFW Outreach staff will assist career center staff with recruiting MSFWs for those specific job orders. In addition, CareerSource Heartland coordinates outreach efforts with the Farmworker Career Development Programs (FCDP) through signed Memorandums of Understanding between CareerSource Heartland and South Florida State College which serves as the FCDP provider for DeSoto, Hardee and Highlands counties and Indian River State College which serves as the FCDP for Okeechobee County.
3. Under the supervision of the Center Branch Managers, MSFW Outreach staff prepares a MSFW Outreach Plan for Hardee County. The plan projects activities, contacts, and estimated hours. The plan includes a focus on both farmworkers and employers. The focus on farmworkers includes visits to organizations, stores, or other areas where MSFWs live, work, and congregate. The focus on employers affirms the commitment to promoting the hiring of MSFWs. Attached to this document is the completed MSFW Outreach Plan for the Hardee County Career Center. Estimated total goals match or exceed those outlined in the Unified Plan.
4. MSFW Outreach staff is fully trained in all aspects of employment-related services to MSFWs. New outreach staff receive training in:
 - Wagner-Peyser (WP) services and CareerSource Heartland local procedures.
 - DEO Form 511N.
 - MSFW regulations to include outreach requirements, full applications, reporting requirements and agricultural job orders.
 - Marketing the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System to farm workers and farmworker advocacy groups.
 - Basic farmworker rights including training on protecting farmworkers against sexual harassment.
 - How to observe the working and living conditions of MSFWs and, upon observation or upon receipt of information regarding a suspected violation of state or federal laws, to document and report the suspected violation to the appropriate enforcement agency for investigation.
 - Farm labor compliance.
 - Other organizations that provide services to MSFWs.
 - Partner programs and support services available.

All CareerSource Heartland career center staff, including MSFW Outreach staff, have access to online training modules and resources through the DEO website for all core programs and receive training on how to serve MSFWs who come to a career center for services. MSFW Outreach staff and career center staff are required to refresh their knowledge on policies and procedures through online training materials, and any online webinar trainings offered on the complaint system and MSFW requirements.

MSFW Outreach staff receive refresher training and farm labor compliance training through attendance at the annual MSFW Professional Development Conference. The conference offers training sessions on MSFW requirements under WP and WIOA, as well as enhanced agricultural

employer services; compliance with employment laws; the knowledge necessary to discuss farmworker rights with MSFWs during outreach; and Reemployment Assistance eligibility issues.

In addition, CareerSource Heartland designates one day each quarter for professional development for all staff, including MSFW Outreach staff, on a variety of different topics to meet employee needs and to ensure that all CareerSource Heartland staff can provide high quality services to all jobseekers and employers, including those who are MSFW jobseekers and agricultural employers.

D. Services Provided through the One-Stop Delivery System

1. CareerSource Heartland and its service providers are committed to serving the farmworkers in LWDA 19. LWDA 19 encompasses several large, heavily populated farmworker communities with an abundance of agricultural labor-intensive harvest activities throughout the area. At all times during normal business hours, persons bilingual in English and Spanish will be available, whether in person or by telephone. CareerSource Heartland staff is trained on the assistance needs of MSFWs and utilize the MSFW desk aide to assist in identifying MSFWs.

Customers are identified as MSFWs at the initial assessment and will be provided with a verbal and written explanation of services available in English, Spanish, or Creole. Career and training services will be provided as needed. Basic and individualized career services will be provided through outreach in the communities and in each Career Center. The MSFWs knowledge, skills and abilities will be assessed through an initial assessment to determine appropriate jobs to which they may be referred. Job referrals will be provided through mass recruitments, H-2A job referrals, other open positions, and job developments. Staff will refer MSFW job seekers to H-2A job orders whenever possible. Staff will ensure terms and conditions of employment are discussed prior to referral and that the job seeker is aware of the assurances afforded. Staff will follow-up on all referrals made to H-2A job orders.

As appropriate, referrals will be made to ESL (English as a Second Language) classes and to CareerSource Heartland workshops to enable MSFWs to become more competitive in the workforce. Staff will also provide career guidance and suggest training programs that would best serve the needs of those MSFWs who are not job ready or those looking for a change in occupation. Referrals will be made, as appropriate, to WIOA and to the local FCDP training programs, including co-enrollments when possible. MSFWs may be referred to Vocational Rehabilitation, older workers programs and housing assistance agencies as needed. Career Center staff is familiar with and will refer MSFWs appropriately to other community supportive services.

2. CareerSource Heartland makes assistance available to all employers, including those in the agricultural industry, in filling job openings. CareerSource Heartland Business Services Representatives perform marketing outreach to growers, harvesters, and processors, through new and existing contacts and encourage job order creation. CSH considers the needs of employers to be a high priority and takes a proactive approach to assist employers in filling their job vacancies. MSFW Outreach staff are encouraged to promote available H-2A jobs and the benefits offered, during their outreach activities. Other outreach activities may include completing I-9s, provision of labor market information, tax credit and employee bonding information, mass recruitment, workshops, and information on employer incentives.

To assist employers and employer organizations with recruiting domestic labor, a copy of The Agricultural Recruitment System: An Agricultural Employer's Guide brochure will be provided. The Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) links employers who have temporary agricultural and food processing jobs with workers who need these jobs and are willing to live temporarily away from their local area. Those employers and/or employer organizations interested in ARS information will be directed to the State's Senior Monitor Advocate.

3. MSFW Outreach staff are prepared to take complaints from farmworkers during outreach and market the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System to MSFWs and farmworker advocacy groups. Information is provided on the Florida Farmworker Helpline, a toll-free number for farmworkers to call if they choose to file a complaint or report a violation anonymously. Outreach materials used by staff include the DEO 511N form, farmworker rights brochure, and the Farmworker Helpline business cards with the toll-free number. This number is also included on complaint posters located in CareerSource Heartland Career Centers. Farmworkers and agencies are informed that complaints can be filed in person at any career center or with an outreach staff. Information on the Agricultural Recruitment System is shared with employers during outreach visits.

E. Significant Multilingual Career Center Plan

CareerSource Heartland is committed to serving the farmworkers in our LWDA. LWDA 19 encompasses several large, heavily populated farmworker communities with an abundance of agricultural labor-intensive harvest activities though out the area. At all times during normal business hours, staff who are bilingual in English and Spanish will be available, either in person or by telephone. CareerSource Heartland staff is trained on assisting MSFWs and utilize the MSFW desk aid to assist in identifying MSFWs.

MSFW Outreach staff shall, by means of written and oral presentation, either spontaneously or recorded, in a language readily understood by MSFWs, explain the following:

- Services available at Career Centers, including the availability of referrals to agricultural H-2A job orders and non-agricultural job orders, training, and supportive services available in the community, career counseling, and job development services;
- Use of DEO Form 511N;
- Types of specific employment opportunities that are currently available in Employ Florida;
- Complaint System;
- Information on other organizations servicing MSFWs; and
- Basic summary of farmworkers' rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

F. Indicators of Compliance

The Migrant Indicators of Compliance (MIC) report in Employ Florida tracks performance to ensure that services are provided to MSFW customers on an equitable level as non-MSFW customers. Career Centers are measured on equity ratio indicators and minimum service level indicators.

Equity Ratio Indicators:

1. Referred to employment
2. Received staff-assisted career services
3. Received staff-assisted career guidance services
4. Received staff-assisted job search activities
5. Referred to other Federal/State Assistance

Minimum Service Level Indicators:

1. Placed in a job
2. Placed with earnings of \$0.50 above minimum wage
3. Placed in long term non-agricultural jobs

LWDA 19 strives to serve farmworkers with the same equity of services as provided to non-farmworkers. The minimum service level process is met through mass recruitments, job developments, referrals to jobs, and outreach at gathering sites. Referrals are made to job developments and job orders that may reflect higher wages, at least \$0.50 above the minimum wage. CareerSource Heartland will ensure sufficient oversight is provided to MSFW Outreach and Wagner-Peyser staff in their efforts to achieve the minimum service level indicators including review of the MIC report to track performance. CareerSource Heartland management staff analyzes and tracks performance on these key indicators on a regular basis.

G. Public Comment

Input for the development of the MSFW Outreach Plan was solicited from CareerSource Heartland MSFW Outreach staff, local FCDP staff, and other applicable staff within CareerSource Heartland. The input received has been incorporated into this document. An electronic copy of this plan was made available via the CareerSource Heartland website for public comment. In addition, notice soliciting comments has also been placed in local newspapers. No public comments have been received to date.

CareerSource Heartland – LWDA 19

MSFW Outreach Plan PY 2020 – 2024

Attachments:

- Attachment A – MSFW Outreach Plan Hardee Career Center 2020 - 2024
- Attachment B – MOU Indian River State College Farmworker Career Development Program
- Attachment C – MOU South Florida State College Farmworker Career Development Program

