

Farmworker Advocacy Network (FAN)

FAN is a network of organizations that advocates for improved living and working conditions of migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs) and their families in North Carolina. FAN member organizations identify problems and issues affecting the farmworker population; track farmworker-focused policy; monitor government and other agencies serving and/or enforcing regulations affecting farmworkers; and bring farmworkers' voices to the legislative process.

About Farmworkers in North Carolina

- North Carolina has the 5th largest farmworker population in the U.S.[❧]
- In 2003, approximately 107,828 MSFWs worked in North Carolina fields [64% migrant and 36% seasonal; with 10% being H-2A workers][❧]
- North Carolina growers employ the largest number of H-2A workers compared to any other state of the union, with nearly 10,000 annually.[❧]
- Over 93% of MSFWs in NC are Spanish-speaking and of Hispanic/Latino origin, predominantly Mexican (with fewer Central American, African American, Asian Pacific Islander, and Caucasian workers)[❧]
- Average educational level of adult farmworkers is 6th grade.[❧]
- Percentage of MSFW by Gender: 78% male; by age: 55% between the ages of 25 – 44.[❧]
- Income Level: 72% reported incomes at or below the federal poverty level (remainder reported as unknown).[❧]
- Health Insurance: 96% uninsured; 3% qualified for Medicaid benefits; 1% were either enrolled in Medicare or had private insurance.[❧]
- Existing housing for MSFWs is typically below safety standards. It is also generally overcrowded and unsanitary.[❧]
- High-risk working and living conditions pose many occupational and other health risks for farmworkers and their dependents, including: Green Tobacco Sickness (GTS); heat stress illnesses; exposure to pesticides and other dangerous chemicals; musculoskeletal pain and strain; physical injuries and falls; malnutrition; socio-economic exploitation; HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), among others.[❧]

Short-Term Goals

- ❧ To provide an opportunity for farmworkers to participate in FAN's strategic planning and other initiatives
- ❧ To affect positive change in the way the H-2A program is implemented and enforced in NC
- ❧ To educate state enforcement and other agencies about the reality of farmworker life and how they can serve and be more responsive to farmworkers' needs

Long-Term Goals

- ❧ To improve farmworkers' understanding of and participation in policy formation
- ❧ To remove exceptions for farmworkers in current laws
- ❧ To introduce new legislation benefiting farmworkers
- ❧ To push for accountability in government enforcement and other agencies regarding farmworkers' issues
- ❧ To improve the overall housing and working conditions for farmworkers in North Carolina
- ❧ To increase knowledge about farmworkers in the general public

[❧] NC Farmworker Health Program's 2003 UDS report and patient profile

[❧] Agricultural Employment Services, North Carolina Employment Security Commission

[❧] Holden, Christopher. "Monograph Series: Housing". Buda, TX: National Center For Farmworker Health, 2001

Participating Organizations

- **Episcopal Farmworker Ministry** responds to the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families, and actively supports opportunities for them to become self-directive.
- **Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC)** is a farm labor union that organizes for economic, legal and human rights for farmworkers. FLOC seeks to address the injustices of sub-minimum wages, exclusion from protective legislation, poor sanitation, health care and housing.
- **Legal Aid of North Carolina - Farmworker Unit***, provides legal representation to farmworkers on a number of issues including, but not limited to, workers' compensation claims, lost wages, health and safety standards, retaliatory employment discrimination, and blacklisting. Legal Aid also conducts outreach to migrant labor camps and conducts community education on migrant issues.
- **National Farm Worker Ministry - NC Office**, mobilizes the religious community to support farmworkers who are organizing for justice, empowerment and equality.
- **NC Community Health Center Association** provides and coordinates technical assistance, training, policy monitoring, and resources to 23 Migrant and Community Health Centers within North Carolina, and in seven mid-Atlantic states (VA, WVA, MD, DE, SC, KY, TN) in order to enhance cultural competence and improve health care delivery to Hispanic/Latino and farmworker patients.
- **NC Justice & Community Development Center Immigrants Legal Assistance Project** provides legal representation to farmworkers who are unable to access traditional legal services programs, and focuses on class actions and impact cases. ILAP also conducts outreach to migrant labor camps and provides education to immigrant advocates about workers' legal rights.
- **NC Farmworkers' Project** is a community-based organization dedicated to organizing migrant and seasonal farmworkers and developing farmworker leaders.
- **NC Farmworker Health Program*** is committed to providing health care through a statewide network of service providers working together to improve the health of migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families in North Carolina.
- **Student Action with Farmworkers (SAF)** is a nonprofit organization that brings students and farmworkers together to learn about each other's lives, share resources and skills, improve conditions for farmworkers and build diverse coalitions working for social change.

**Advisory Member only*

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