



Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services Advisory Committee

Meeting details

Date: Wednesday, January 17, 2024

Time: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Location: ZOOM

Committee members present

- Jon DeVaney
- Delia Peña
- Michele Besso
- Mike Gempler
- Rosalinda Guillen
- Elizabeth Strater

Non-voting agency representatives

- Ignacio Marquez
- Uriel Iniguez
- Juan Gamez

Committee members absent

- Edgar Franks
- Jeff Perrault

ESD staff

- Joy Adams
- Bertha Clayton
- Vickie Carlson
- Petra Meraz

Summary

Meeting Recorded

This meeting was recorded and is available on <https://esd.wa.gov/newsroom/Ag-committee>

Welcome and Agenda

Employment Security Department (ESD) Policy Director, Joy Adams, welcomed everyone, reviewed the agenda for the meeting and asked if anyone had any questions. (See Addendum I.)

2024 Legislative Session Briefing – Joy Adams, Policy Director, ESD

Recording timestamp **00:01:08**

Call to the committee’s attention that we have a bill regarding H-2A workers in both the House and the Senate. This bill is early on and has not been heard in the Senate, it was only heard in the House (Labor and Workplace Standards Committee) this morning. [HB 2226](#) and its companion; [SB 5996](#) – Concerning collecting data on the H-2A worker program and from certain hand harvesters – pears and blueberries, We will have more information on these in February.

ASWS Office Update – ASWS Office, ESD (See Addendum II.)

Recording timestamp **00:03:23**

ASWS Office & Compliance Update – Bertha Clayton, Director, ASWS Office

OFLC Monitoring and JLARC Audit Updates

ASWS Education & Employer Training:

- NCAE Conference
- Washington Growers League H-2A Conference
- WA Workforce Association - breakout session presentation
- WA Tree Fruit Association – HORT Expo Supervisor Training presentation

- Complaint Statistics Recording timestamp 00:15:45
- ASWS Goals & Objectives – 2024
- Compliance Exercises Recording timestamp 00:19:59

FLC Applications – Petra Meraz, Supervisor, FLC Program Recording timestamp 00:29:41

Questions & Answers / Comments:

Mike: What’s the difference between a comenced and an active? **Petra:** Comenced means the contract has started, and active means the workers are actually working.

Temporary Worker Housing Inspections – Clarification (See Addendum III.) Recording timestamp 00:37:24

Joy Adams, Policy Director, ESD
Bertha J. Clayton, Director, ASWS Office, ESD
Gerald Caird, Lodging Program Supervisor, DOH

Questions & Answers / Comments:

John: Do you have an idea of a timeline for a communication going out to the industry specifying new process, procedures and point of contacts regarding inspections?

Bertha: ESD will be revising its agreement with DOH and LNI about how these housing inspections are conducted; as far as expected timeframe; we are 6-8 months out. It will be after this season, and we will be working together as a team to communicate with stakeholders, get feedback and make sure everyone is fully informed along the way. Please reach out to me as a point of contact if any questions arise.

Roll Call – Vickie Carlson, Management Analyst, ASWS Office, ESD Recording timestamp 00:45:07

Employment Security Department (ESD) Policy Director, Joy Adams, asked Vickie Carlson to take roll. Six voting members were present. Motion to approve the October 18 & Novemebr 8th meeting minutes- Mike Gempler, 2nd from Elizabeth Strater. Motion carries.

2024 Meeting Schedule – Joy Adams Recording timestamp 00:49:10

Motion to accept the 2024 ASWS Meeting Schedule – Michele Besso, 2nd from Mike Gempler. Motion carries.

ESD Agricultural Recruitment Customer Experience Study Phase II (Fall): Findings and Recommendations (See Addendum IV.) Recording timestamp 00:54:00

Anusha Yadav, User Experience Researcher, Anthro-Tech, Inc.
Lacey Jacoby, User Experience Researcher, Anthro-Tech, Inc.

Questions & Answers / Comments:

Michele: Really appreciates the work and the clear presentation. The struggle to clearly define the outreach worker has been there from the beginning. I feel like there might be room there for some improvement.

Mike: Agrees with Michele regarding the MSFW outreach worker.

Ignacio: Thank you, I also agree with Michele and Mike... and as a previous ESD employee who managed some workers at WorkSource offices- I can tell you that it’s difficult to explain your job to someone who has not done the work or have any background in farmwork and even more difficult to get your supervisor to support you.

2024 Planning – Bertha Clayton, Director, ASWS Office (See Addendum V.) Recording timestamp 01:48:48

- Committee Focus Areas for 2024
- Member Expectations

Questions & Answers / Comments:

Jon: Looking again at the minutes from the November meeting; we had a discussion around that language on the 2024 goal. I think we changed it from “reducing the number of H-2A positions requested” to just reducing the need for the program by improving; or the number of positions in the program by maximizing domestic recruitment.

Good of the Order – Joy Adams

Recording timestamp **01:52:48**

Future Agenda Items

Jon: Request for ESD to provide meeting materials (at least the questions that we're going to want to be thinking about) to the committee well in advance of the next meeting so that members are able to come prepared and aren't spending limited committee discussion time thinking about our responses.

Joy: We will do everything we can to get this out as soon as possible.

Public Comment

Adjourned

Joy Adams thanked everyone for their continued active participation and for their commitment to this work, then ended the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

2024 Meetings

The next Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services Advisory Committee meeting is on:

- **March 20, 2024 – 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m.** – In-Person: 212 Maple Park Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98501

Addendums

ADDENDUM I.



AGENDA

Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services (ASWS) Advisory Committee
 Wednesday, January 17, 2024 | 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm | Zoom | 212 Maple Park Ave SE Olympia WA 98501

TIME	TOPIC
1:00 pm	Welcome Joy Adams, Director, Employment System Policy & Integrity Division, ESD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll Call – Vickie Carlson • Agenda Review – Joy Adams • Approval of the October and November meeting minutes
1:10 pm	2024 Legislative Session Briefing – Joy Adams, Director, ESPI
1:15 pm	ASWS Office Update – Bertha Clayton, Director, ASWS Office, ESD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASWS Office & Compliance Team Update – Bertha Clayton • FLC Applications – Petra Meraz, Supervisor, Foreign Labor Certification Program
1:30 pm	Temporary Worker Housing Inspections Updates and Clarification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joy Adams, Director, ESPI, ESD • Bertha Clayton, Director, ASWS Office, ESD • Gerald Caird, Lodging Manager, DOH
1:45 pm	ESD Agricultural Recruitment Customer Experience Study Phase II (Fall): Findings and Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anusha Yadav, User Experience Researcher, Anthro-Tech, Inc. • Lacey Jacoby, User Experience Researcher, Anthro-Tech, Inc.
2:40 pm	2024 Committee Work Planning – Bertha Clayton, Director, ASWS Office, ESD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of 2024 Meeting Schedule • Committee discussion regarding member expectations
2:50 pm	Good of the Order – Joy Adams
2:55 pm	Public Comment
3:00 pm	Adjourn <i>Next meeting: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 1-3 PM, ZOOM</i>

GROUND RULES

No side conversations | Phones on silent | Let people speak without interruption | Respect the opinion of others | Strive for understanding | Speak your mind | Strive for common ground | Assume good intent | Stay focused on task at hand and be willing to come back to the topic | Make sure everyone understands | Look out for each other | Take care of your own comfort | Ask for what you need

ADDENDUM II.

2024 Legislative Session Briefing



Joy Adams, ESPI Director, ESD

ASWS Office & Compliance Update January 2024



Bertha J. Clayton, ASWS Director, ESD

Monitoring and Audit Updates *OFLC Monitoring (August 2023)*



Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC) Audit Outcome

- OFLC monitoring report received by ESD 11/15/2023
- ESD response sent to OFLC on 12/15/2023
- Confirmation that all findings “resolved” received by ESD on 1/9/2024

The Office of Foreign Labor Certification programs unit has reviewed your responses to the findings and have concluded the following:
Finding 1: Modernization the Collection of H2B Job Orders Information- **RESOLVED**
Finding 2: Performance Management-**RESOLVED**
Finding 3: Performance Management- **RESOLVED**

Next Steps:

- ESD will coordinate with Washington LNI and DOH to develop and implement an updated agreement regarding H-2A Temporary Worker Housing. (Roles and responsibilities, timeframes, communication, record keeping, etc.) Completion timeframe: 6-12 months .

Monitoring and Audit Updates *JLARC Audit (2022-2023)*



Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee

- Preliminary monitoring report received by ESD 12/26/2023
- 1 Finding – Coordination with LNI/DOH/WSDA for Field Checks (RCW 50.75.020(c))
 - ASWS has already conducted coordinated field checks with LNI and DOH in 2023
- JLARC Committee preliminary report hearing 1/4/2024
 - Potential examination of amendment to remove WSDA from RCW 50.75.020(c)
 - https://leg.wa.gov/jlarc/reports/2024/H2AVisa/p_01/default.html
 - ESD response due to JLARC by 1/29/2024
- Final JLARC report and JLARC hearing in April 2024
- Next Steps:
 - ESD will engage LNI DOSH and DOH for inter-agency agreements for field check coordination in 2024.

6

JLARC Hearing 1-4-2024



Preliminary Report
ESD administration of the H-2A temporary farmworker visa program
 Jill Setran, Zane Potter, Ashley Trunnell

Contact Us

Research Analysts
 Jill Setran (360) 786-5679 | jill.setran@leg.wa.gov
 Ashley Trunnell (360) 786-5181 | ashley.trunnell@leg.wa.gov

Project Coordinator
 Valerie Whitener (360) 786-5191 | valerie.whitene@leg.wa.gov

Legislative Auditor
 Zane Potter (360) 786-5293 | zane.potter@leg.wa.gov
 Eric Thomas (360) 786-5182 | eric.thomas@leg.wa.gov

7

ASWS Education & Employer Training

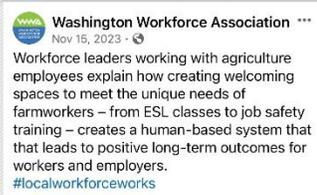


National Conference Ag. Employers, Henderson, NV, Nov 28-Dec 1, 2023



Washington Grower's League, H-2A Conference, January 9, 2024

ASWS Education & Employer Training



Washington Workforce Association Conference Nov. 14-16, 2023, Tacoma, WA



WA Tree Fruit Association – HORT Expo, Supervisor Training, December 5, 2023, Kennewick, WA

Compliance Stats FY24: 10/01/23 - 9/30/24



Site Visits: 47

- Approximate number of workers contacted: 3,098

Field Checks:

- Completed: 3
- Pending: 1

10

ASWS Goals & Objectives - 2024



Inter-agency coordination for outreach and compliance



Clarifying housing inspection protocols – new inter-agency agreement planned.



Improving domestic recruitment knowledge and supervisor level



Improving farmworker accessibility to compliance staff (app-based communication)



Developing and delivering employer education and compliance tools and resources.

ASWS training with Compliance Exercises Let's try one!



COMPLIANCE EXERCISE #1

Domestic Recruitment Obligation

Juan is a Supervisor at ABC Farms. ABC Farms has a H-2A contract and H-2A workers will be arriving from Mexico in two weeks. Maria is a domestic farmworker (worker who lives in the U.S.). She asks Juan if ABC Farms is hiring. Juan tells her that H-2A workers are arriving soon and so the farm doesn't need any more workers.

1. What employer obligation did Juan violate?
2. What should Juan have told Maria?
3. What are some potential consequences to the employer of Juan's actions?

12

FLC Applications



Employment
Security
Department
WASHINGTON STATE

Petra Meraz, Foreign Labor Certification Program Supervisor, ASWS, ESD

Year to Date Comparison



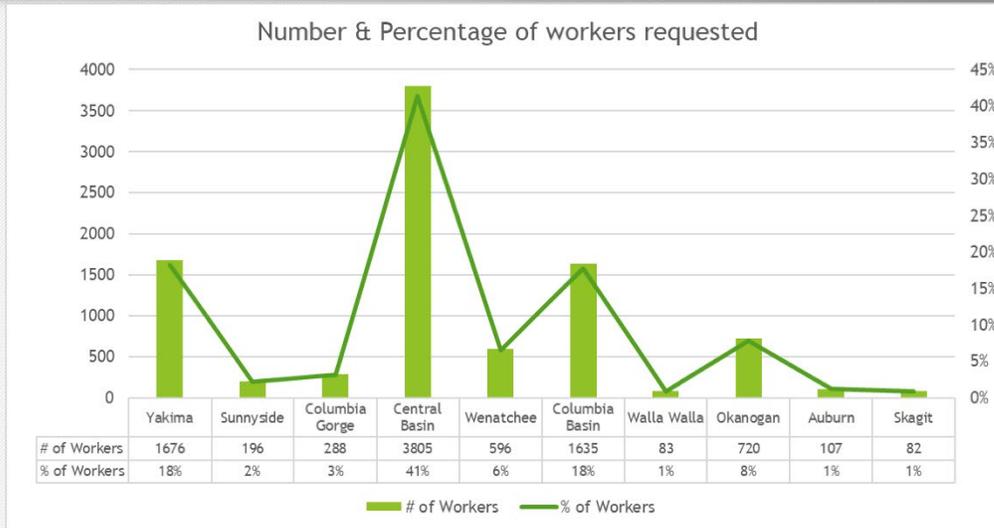
	2024	2023
■ # Applications	126	128
■ # Workers Requested	9250	13117
■ # Withdrawn Applications	1	12
■ # Withdrawn Workers	20	6
■ # DOL Denied Applications	0	1
■ # DOL Denied Workers	0	0
■ # Commenced Applications	11	8
■ # Commenced Workers	592	113
■ # Impossibilities Applications	0	0
■ # Impossibilities Workers	0	0
■ # Active Applications	11	7
■ # Active Workers	592	118

Monthly Comparison – Nov/Dec 2023



	NOV	DEC
■ # Applications	41	85
■ # Workers Requested	2671	6579
■ # Withdrawn Applications	0	1
■ # Withdrawn Workers	0	20
■ # DOL Denied Applications	0	0
■ # DOL Denied Workers	0	0
■ # Commenced Applications	4	7
■ # Commenced Workers	511	81
■ # Impossibilities Applications	0	0
■ # Impossibilities Workers	0	0
■ # Active Applications	8	3
■ # Active Workers	519	73

Number & Percentage of Workers Requested by AHO to date



ADDENDUM III.

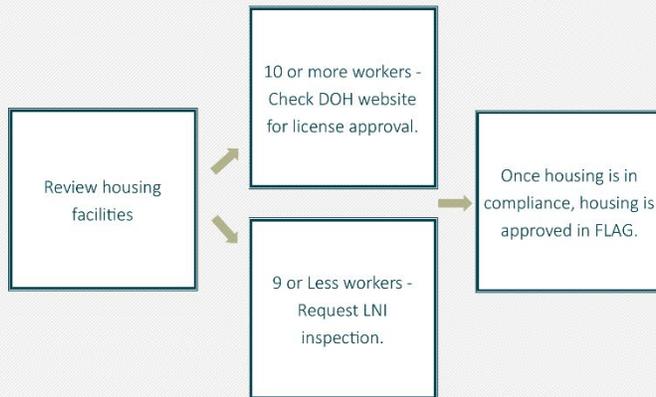
Temporary Worker Housing Inspections – Updates & Clarification



**Employment
Security
Department**
WASHINGTON STATE

Joy Adams, Director, ESPI, ESD
 Bertha J. Clayton, ASWS Director, ESD
 Petra Meraz, FLC Team Supervisor, ESD
 Gerald Caird, Lodging Program Supervisor, DOH

High Level review of ESD's ETA-790 Housing Certification Process



What's Changed re: TWH in WA:

- Temporary Worker Housing License for Hotels and Motels: hotels/motels housing temporary workers will need to obtain a TWH license from DOH to house farmworkers for more than 30 days.
- Improvements in processes, communication, and record keeping about housing statuses as between ESD DOH.

What's the Same re TWH in WA:

- Washington Administrative Code (including public water systems, ceiling heights, certificate of occupancy requirements, etc.)
- 9 or less → LNI inspection, 10 or more → DOH inspection

ADDENDUM IV.

ESD Agricultural Recruitment Customer Experience Study Phase II (Fall): Findings and Recommendations



Olga Kondratjeva, Research and Analysis Manager, DATA Division, ESD
 Anusha Yadav, User Experience Researcher, Anthro-Tech, Inc.
 Lacey Jacoby, User Experience Researcher, Anthro-Tech, Inc.



ESD AGRICULTURAL RECRUITMENT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STUDY

ARCX Phase II: Fall Findings and Recommendations

FALL 2023

anthrotech

Content

- ④ Introductions
- ④ Project Overview
- ④ Methods
- ④ Findings & Recommendations
- ④ Conclusion & Next Steps

Anthro-Tech Team

- ② Anusha Yadav, UX Researcher
- ② Lacey Jacoby, UX Researcher
- ② Becca Bonny, UX Project Manager
- ② Camy Naasz, Director of Human-Centered Design
- ② Krissy Kimura, UX Project Manager

ESD Team

- ② Olga Kondratjeva: Manager, Program Evaluation, Research, and Analysis, Division: Data Architecture, Transformation & Analytics
- ② Bertha Clayton: Director, Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services, Division: Employment System Policy & Integrity
- ② Craig Carroll: Business Operations Manager, Division: Employment Connections
- ② Gustavo Aviles: Chief Analytics Officer, Division: Data Architecture, Transformation & Analytics
- ② Vickie Carlson: Administrative Assistant, Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services, Division: Employment System Policy & Integrity
- ② Michael Luchini: Product Manager, Workforce Development, Division: Product, Planning and Performance
- ② Marissa Myer: Product Analyst, Workforce Development, Division: Product, Planning and Performance
- ② Joy Adams: Director, Division: Employment System Policy & Integrity (ESPI)

Project Overview

BACKGROUND & STUDY GOALS

The problem

- ② The ESD agricultural recruitment system currently contributes very little to the apple, berry, cherry, grape, and pear production labor markets
- ② ESD has limited understanding of how agricultural employers and agricultural workers connect with each other to meet their employment needs

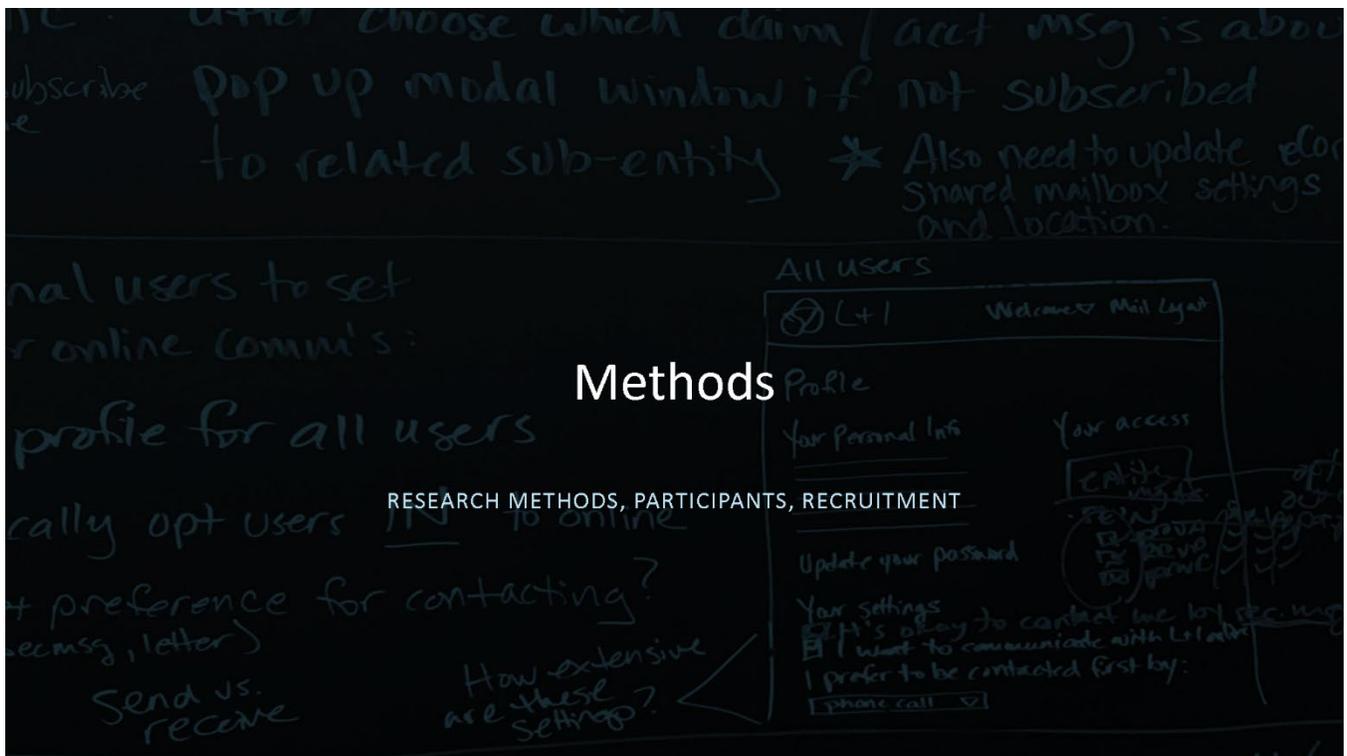


Opportunity

- ② The ASWS Committee wants to understand the experience of farmworkers and employers with ESD's agricultural recruitment system; examine dynamics, gaps, and opportunities for improvement
- ② Anthro-Tech's research is divided into two phases:
 - Phase I – Initial research to understand how farmworkers are getting jobs and how employers are finding workers
 - Phase II – More specific research during harvest seasons for the specialty crops and understanding more about ESD's role
 - Fall 2023 – apples, grapes, and pears in Yakima and Benton; this report shares the findings from Fall research
 - Spring 2024 – berries and cherries

Specific objectives for phase II

- ② Align the research recruitment and timing with the harvest seasons for five specialty crops: cherries, berries, apples, pears, and grapes
- ② Identify resources and tools that best support farmworkers and employers in the job search and recruitment process
- ② Understand WorkSource's internal processes around job orders, referrals and recruitment
- ② Identify the touchpoints between WorkSource offices and workers and employers
- ② Help ESD better understand their system to implement specific, actionable recommendations



RESEARCH METHODS, PARTICIPANTS, RECRUITMENT

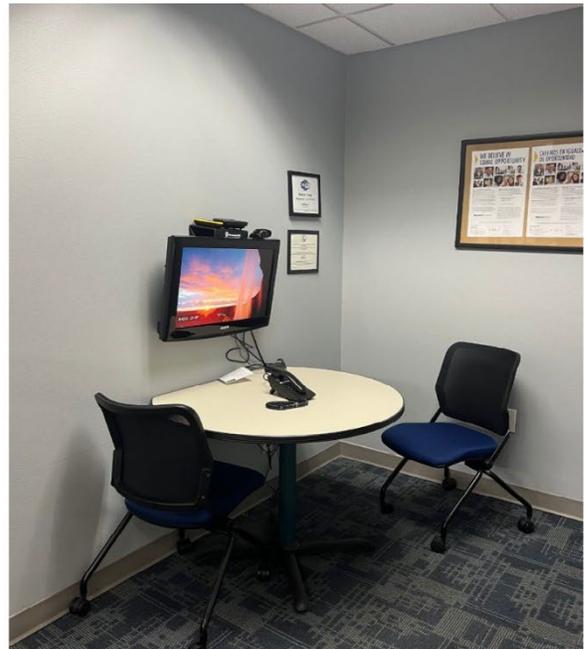
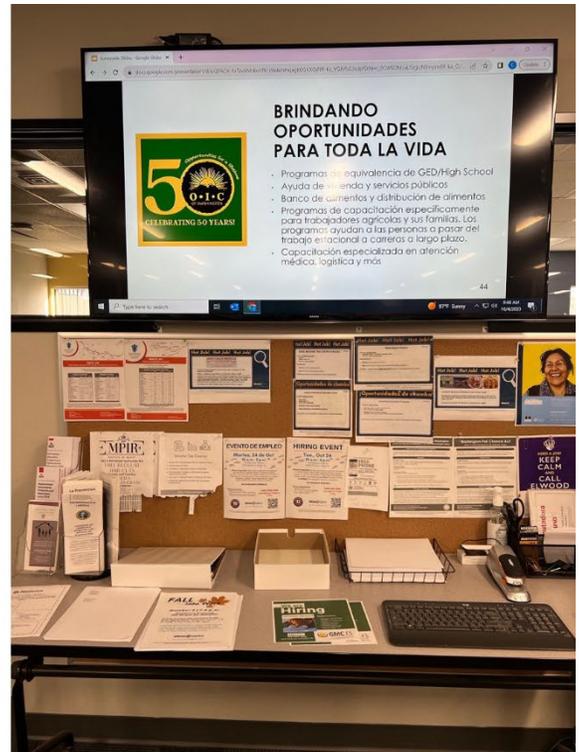
Methods

We used various research methods designed to gather qualitative data and insights:

- ⊗ Remote 1:1 interviews with WorkSource staff at two offices
- ⊗ Contextual inquiry with WorkSource staff at two offices
 - In-context observational research, job shadowing
- ⊗ Interviews with farmworkers
 - 1:1 in-person interviews conducted in Spanish
- ⊗ Interviews with employers and farm labor contractors
 - 1:1 in-person and remote interviews

Participants: WorkSource Staff

- ③ Four WorkSource office staff participated in remote interviews
- ③ Four WorkSource office staff participated in in-person contextual inquiry / job shadowing
- ③ All participants were from two WorkSource offices; Columbia Basin and Sunnyside



Participants: Farmworkers

- ③ Five farmworkers participated from Yakima and Benton Counties
 - Recruited with support from MSFW Outreach Specialist and community partners
- ③ We screened potential participants based on the following criteria:
 - Currently living in Washington
 - Current employment in Yakima or Benton counties
 - Experience working in this year’s harvest of specialty crops (apples, pears, grapes)
 - Mix of H-2A experience

Participants: Employers & Farm Labor Contactors

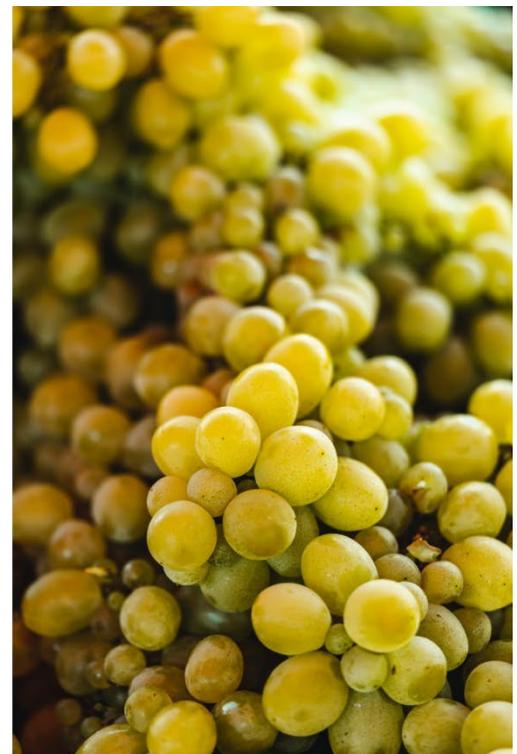
- ③ Four employers and farm labor contractors participated from Yakima and Benton counties
 - Recruited using various sources, including job fairs, WorkSource staff connections, door-to-door visits, phase I connections, cold calls, emails, and ESD project teams’ contacts
- ③ We screened potential participants based on the following criteria:
 - Involved in recruitment
 - Currently working in Yakima or Benton counties
 - Working in this year’s harvest of specialty crops (apples, pears, grapes)
 - Mix of H-2A experience
 - Mix of farm sizes



Findings & Recommendations

Four main themes

- ② WorkSource processes
- ② Employer and farm labor contractor operations and interactions with WorkSource
- ② Timeline and process of job search and recruitment during harvest season
- ② Communication channels, barriers, and misconceptions



WorkSource Processes

WorkSource offices that participated reported challenges with collecting and managing customer information

- ③ Participating offices store customer contact information in staff cell phones, which are not a reliable source

“Stuff like this happens all the time.”

— WorkSource staff member, describing losing all phone contacts after recent IT update

- ③ Recommendations

- Document clear procedures for MSFW Outreach Specialists to regularly back up phone data (contact information)
- Effectively provide important notifications and updates (such as from the IT Department) to staff working in the field

WorkSource offices that participated reported challenges with collecting and managing customer information

- ③ Processes to collect customer data can hinder the ability of participating offices to provide customers with a service
- ③ “Data” = information collected by WorkSource about individual workers, employers, and farm labor contractors to facilitate service offerings
- ③ Recommendations
 - Clearly communicate ESD’s data management strategy to WorkSource offices, including how and why data is collected, stored, managed, and used
 - Focus on context-sensitive guidelines for data collection in the field and in WorkSource offices, including outlining when data is not collected

“We attack [workers] when they walk in the door and get personal information for unknown reasons to them because we’re not really providing a service at that point. They’re walking in to use the resource room, look at the bulletin.

We want to know their name, their phone number, their social security number, their first born, all this stuff. They’re like, you haven’t given me any value yet.

If they look at jobs on the computer, we are pressuring them to register for the account. Often times they get the phone number for the employer, leave, and we haven’t even touched them.”

— WorkSource Staff Member

There is a lack of translation support for participating WorkSource offices

- ③ Recommendations
 - Speak with additional WorkSource offices to evaluate translation support needs
 - Prioritize faster translation of official documents used across WorkSource offices

“I think there’s a lag time in translation services, in general. Not so much verbal, but for documents we have, and I’ve heard interviewers talk about it, it can take literally a year or more. [What documents?] Like our reemployment interviews...”

A lot of the official documents are old, maybe we’re using a translation from several years ago, and there have been updates to the English version but not the Spanish version.”

— WorkSource Staff Member

Participating WorkSource offices reported unclear expectations about the division of outreach work and office work

- ② Recommendations
 - Consider encouraging other staff to participate in event outreach, not just MSFW Outreach Specialists
 - Help WorkSource offices share best practices with each other
 - More clearly define employer outreach procedures, goals, and staff division



Employer and farm labor contractor operations and interactions with WorkSource

Employers separately recruit domestic non-H-2A workers and foreign H-2A workers

	Employer staff managing domestic worker recruitment for non-H-2A jobs	Employer staff managing H-2A program
Job title	Foreman, Crew Boss, Supervisor, Human Resources Assistant	Human Resources, Administration
Location	Farm, satellite office	Corporate office in city
Primary language	Spanish	English
Role	Recruit and oversee domestic workers; if employer owns multiple farms, work with other foremen to transfer workers among farms based on harvest needs	Manage H-2A administrative work, ensure employer follows regulations
Knowledge of H-2A	Minimal	Extensive
Main interaction with WorkSource	Request recruitment support for non-H-2A domestic roles	Provide job descriptions for WorkSource WA postings, manage WorkSource referrals, compliance

Goals of providing services to employers vary among participating WorkSource offices

- ② The main value of WorkSource services for employers is getting workers when they need them

“The relationships have changed, the expectations have changed. We’re a last resort. When they call, they say I need apple pickers now. We either get them or we don’t. We either make them happy or we don’t.”

— WorkSource Staff Member

“It would be helpful to get support during that period [of labor shortage]...There is just not as many young people that want to do this kind of work and are moving up the economic ladder. I think longer term, labor shortage is going to be an issue. As far as ESD is concerned, they know those numbers better than anyone.”

— Farm Labor Contractor

- ② WorkSource offices reported that H-2A referrals make it possible to visit employers and monitor the conditions and treatment of workers

“There’s a lot of abuse of H-2A, but if we can’t get a placement, we can’t go check. Even if an employer is only hiring foreign workers and blatantly telling people, we can’t go if we don’t have a placement.”

— WorkSource Staff Member

“For ESD, I know it is mostly compliance, so my background in compliance work helps me.”

— Farm Labor Contractor

Participating WorkSource offices reported that digital tools and communication do not match employer needs

- ② Recommendations

- Where possible, prioritize employers’ preferred methods of communication
- Clarify goals for WorkSourceWA use among employers and ensure this is clear to WorkSource staff
- Define the benefits of WorkSourceWA for employers, beyond its mandatory use for H-2A recruitment
- Reduce and simplify the steps to register for a WorkSourceWA account
- Consider how to better support employers logging on to WorkSourceWA, especially amid staff turnover

“Now we have WorkSourceWA, where employers have to register themselves. It’s a chore for them. They don’t want to.

If you convince them to do it, it’s difficult. It’s employer self-service. In order for me to support them, they need to create account with SAW credentials.

With [agriculture], it doesn’t fit in their world. They don’t have time to go out of the field and log into a system to create a job order for apple picking, you don’t see a lot of [agriculture] job orders except for H-2A which is a requirement. It’s a mandate and that’s how they get there.”

— WorkSource Staff Member

Timeline and process of job search and recruitment during harvest season

In-person outreach and connections are critical to finding jobs and recruiting during harvest season

⦿ Recommendations

- Facilitate in-person connection between employers and prospective farmworkers before and during harvest season
 - This could be done by expanding outreach efforts to create more opportunities for early engagement and communication

“In every case, both domestic and foreign, there is a learning curve... there is an investment employers put into setting things up, so they do prefer to have people that would want to come back.”

– Farm Labor Contractor, on the value of recruiting returning workers

“[We] do not require workers to have prior experience—Anyone who shows up and can work.”

– Foreman, on his recruitment approach during harvest season

Hiring timeline during harvest season is unpredictable and often immediate

🕒 Recommendations

- Improve communication between employers and domestic farmworkers
 - For example, use non-digital resources (e.g., flyers), digital platforms (Facebook), community spaces, and local media (e.g., local radio) to advertise job opportunities quickly and efficiently



“I have relations that work there, and we were chatting, and they said it was a good job and that was it. Also in the radio, they announce a lot that they’re looking for workers. They say to call this phone number because they’re looking for workers and you can start right away... For this job, there was an application to fill out, they said yes, you can start working then or come the next day.”

- Farmworker, on their job search and application timeline

Simple and straightforward job application process is most effective during harvest

🕒 Recommendations

- Encourage employers and WorkSource (i.e., H-2A) to adapt job application processes to match the harvest hiring timeline

“For this company, there was an application to fill out, they said yes, you can start working then or come the next day. [How did you fill it out?] In person. [Did anyone help?] Yes, they fill it out and you must sign it. They had to read it to say you’re ok with it, that you’re going to work the full contract, that you will follow the terms of the H-2A contract, then you sign.”

— Farmworker, on their H-2A job application process

“They sent me an application, I needed to sign, and then I started the job. [What was the application like?] Not a normal application, name of the agency, the contact information, they had signed, I just needed to put my name and sign. [Did anyone help?] No, it’s all here in my mind.”

— Farmworker, on their job application process (not H-2A)

Recruitment during harvest is a challenge for employers due to the increase in seasonal demand for labor, emphasizing the need for flexibility in employment arrangements

🕒 Recommendations

- Encourage employers to provide training and skill development to farmworkers to attract them to jobs and increase retention
 - Farmworkers are more likely to be attracted to opportunities where they are supported and trained for success
- Consider opportunities to streamline the H-2A contract process to make farmworkers aware of opportunities and reduce the barriers to access

“Generally, employers prefer to have workers through the contract—that is why the contracts are written the way they are. [Agricultural] recruitment is difficult—availability is a challenge—there are not as many people who want to do [agricultural] labor because it is hard.

Employers feel this way too, if there are workers who are able, willing, and qualified, please send them. This program has gotten so expensive that if there are workers applying, you know, that’s kind of like the overarching message. Hey, if you do have domestic workers that want to apply for [agricultural] jobs, like send them to these job orders. And I think that’s like the overarching feeling amongst all H-2A employers—is yes, if you got workers, then send them.”

— Farm labor contractor

Retention of domestic workers can be improved by providing a better working environment

⌚ Recommendations

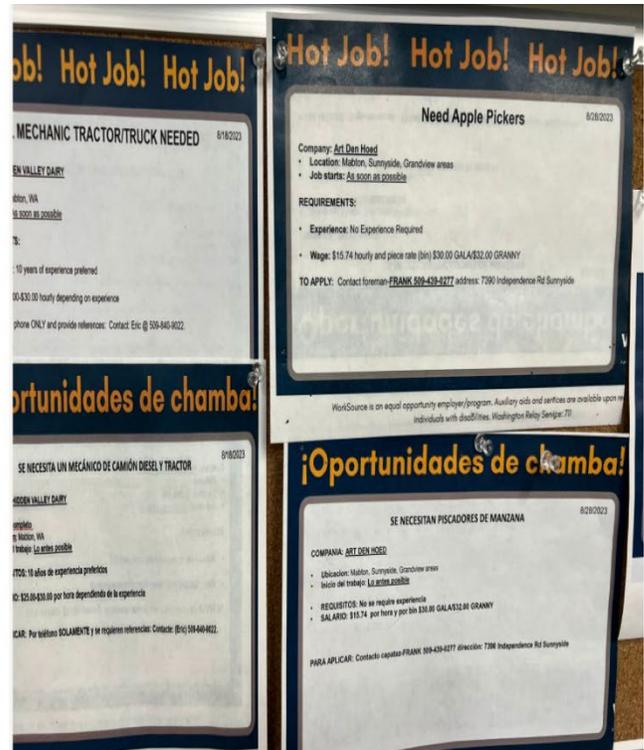
- Raise awareness amongst employers regarding the importance of supportive work environment for farmworkers, as farmworker well-being is vital for long-term retention
- Provide resources and training to employers to encourage fair working conditions and treatment of workers, emphasizing impact on farmworker retention
- Create and promote communication between employers and farmworkers to create transparency and trust (e.g., through the MSFW Outreach Specialist)



Communication channels, barriers, and misconceptions

Domestic farmworkers face a lack of communication and transparency about job expectation, contracts, and future opportunities

- ② Recommendations
 - Create simple non-digital resources (i.e. flyers) in Spanish to support farmworkers’ job search
 - These should have critical information, where legally possible, such as pay, location, and contact information



Generally, domestic farmworkers lack awareness of the H-2A program, ESD, or WorkSource

- ② Recommendations
 - Provide clear information about H-2A jobs, ESD and WorkSource, including non-digital resources
 - Address misconceptions around H-2A jobs; create clear communication channels for everyone involved to address concerns, share information about job expectations, and be transparent with contract details
 - Create simple non-digital resources (i.e. flyers) in Spanish with key information to support farmworkers in their job search

“This [WorkSource flyer] grabs my attention more because of the color. I see it’s looking for agricultural jobs which is interesting, but then I see it’s for H-2A workers so I can’t apply for that.

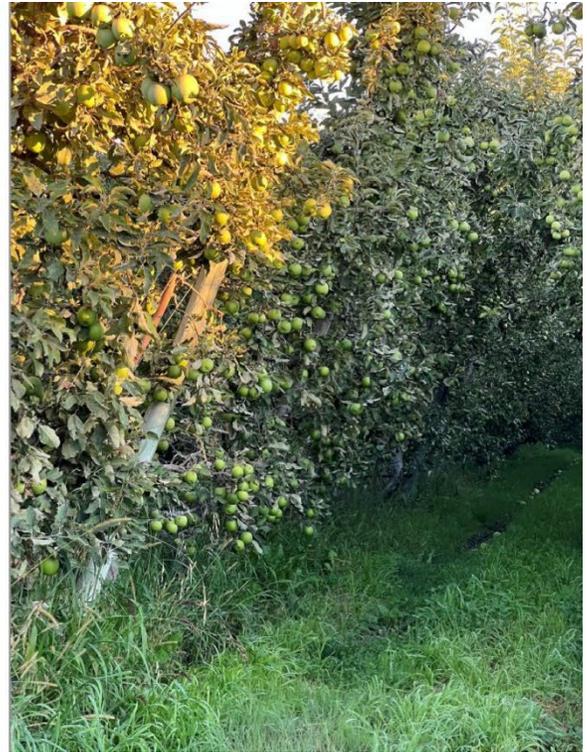
[Why not?] Because we’re here. It’s for people from Mexico. It’s too bad because the pay information is here, and the pay is good. [But you did an H-2A job before?] We worked alongside H-2A workers.

[Can local workers with documentation apply for H-2A jobs?] No, I have heard that’s only for foreign workers who are coming here to work from another country. We don’t qualify.”

– Farmworker, reacting to flyer

The role of outreach specialist(s) between domestic workers and employers important in addressing communication barriers

- ② Recommendations
 - Create a support system for MSFW Outreach Specialists (e.g., tools, resources, additional staff) to ensure their outreach efforts are supported and effective prior and during harvest season
 - Consider expanding the MSFW Outreach Specialist program to facilitate more outreach efforts



... which claim / acct msg is about
subscribe pop up modal window if not subscribed
to related sub-entity * Also need to update eLoc
shared mailbox settings and location.

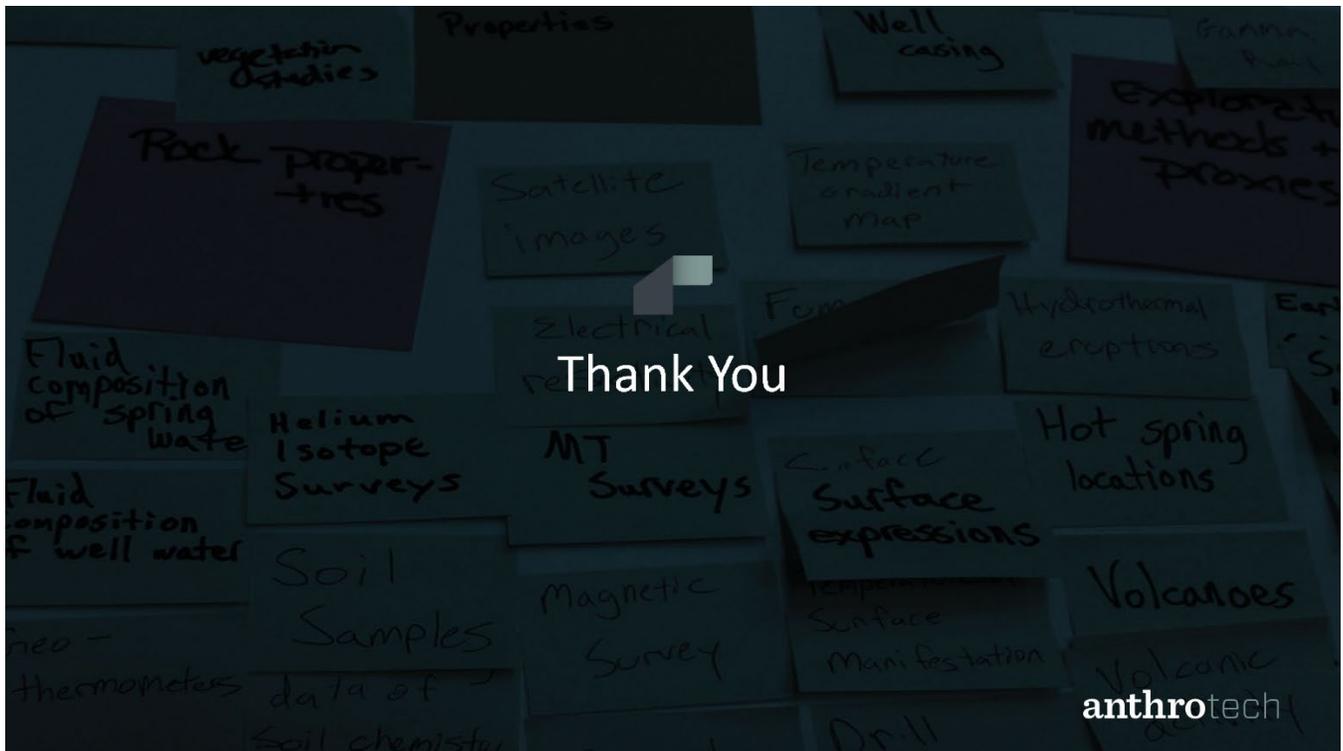
Conclusion & Next Steps

nal users to set
r online comm's:
profile for all users
cally opt users IN to online
+ preference for contacting?
(ecmsg, letter)
Send vs. receive
How extensive are these settings?

All users
L+1 Welcome Mail List
Your Personal Info
Your access
Update your password
Your settings
It's okay to contact me by (ecmsg)
I want to communicate with L+1 about
I prefer to be contacted first by:
[phone call] [v]

Conclusion and next steps

- ② Findings point to both simple and complex challenges
- ② We recommend ESD more clearly defines and implements goals for their role in agricultural recruitment in Washington for specialty crops
- ② We recommend phased changes
- ② Anthro-Tech to continue the research of Phase II in Spring/Summer 2024



ADDENDUM V.

2024 ASWS Committee Work Planning



Bertha J. Clayton, ASWS Director, ESD

2024 ASWS Committee Meeting Schedule



Third Wednesday of Each Month with the following exceptions:

- * Thursday June 20, 2024 (Holiday)
- * Thursday July 25, 2024 (Additional meeting added in July due to 2024 ASWS Report)
- * December 2024 (No meeting scheduled)

Virtual Meetings: **8**

In person Meetings: **4**

All meetings will have hybrid capability

Pre-meeting materials will be sent to committee members the Friday before the meeting.



6/7 members prefer that members turn their cameras on while speaking during virtual meetings

Committee Focus Areas



2024: Improving recruitment of domestic farmworkers/reducing number of H2A positions requested

2024 Legislative Report

2023: Temporary Worker Housing, Enforcement agency coordination

Member Expectations: Suggested Committee Discussion Points



In virtual meetings – clarify how speakers will be recognized to speak.

More “give and take” between committee members and presenters

Ask members to prepare thoughts in advance of meeting based on materials, so there is less presentation time and more discussion time.

Better efficiency – reduce unrelated material and conversation irrelevant to the topic.

Members should be mindful that all input is valuable. Members should be allowed to speak without interruption when they have the floor.

Review statute mandates to committee during first in person meeting and break them up for discussion during each of the three subsequent in person meetings.

Good of the Order



- Future Agenda Items
- Public Comment



Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Employment Security Department
WASHINGTON STATE

ASWS Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Zoom

Contact information

Joy Adams, Director of Employment System Policy & Integrity Division joy.adams@esd.wa.gov

Employment Security Department • Employment System Policy & Integrity