



Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services Advisory Committee

Meeting details

Date: Thursday, November 18, 2021

Time: 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Location: Virtual meeting due to COVID-19

Committee members present

- Jonathan DeVaney
- Jeff Perrault
- Victoria Ruddy
- Michele Besso
- Michael Gempler

Non-voting agency representatives

- Todd Phillips
- Uriel Iniguez

Committee members absent

- Edgar Franks
- Rosalinda Guillen
- Delia Peña
- Ignacio Marquez

ESD staff

- Gustavo Aviles
- Olga Kondratjeva
- Dan Zeitlin
- Alberto Isiordia
- Rene Maldonado
- Oscar Cerda
- Ana Alcala-Rodriguez
- Petra Meraz
- Tamara Johnson
- Craig Carroll

Summary

Meeting Recorded

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

Welcome and Introductions

Employment Security Department (ESD) Policy Director, Dan Zeitlin, welcomed everyone and asked Tamara Johnson to take roll. Five voting members were present constituting a quorum.

Agenda

Recording timestamp **00:05:23**

Dan Zeitlin reviewed the agenda for the meeting and asked if anyone had any questions. (See Addendum I.)

Meeting Minutes

Recording timestamp **00:08:30**

Dan Zeitlin requested that everyone review the meeting minutes for October 21, 2021 and provide their feedback. Jon DeVaney made a motion to approve the October 21, 2021 minutes. Mike Gempler seconded the motion. The October 21, 2021 meeting minutes were approved.

DOH Updates – Todd Phillips

- Heather Drummond presented: Recording timestamp **00:10:30**
Testing Vaccination Update – Agricultural Workers, November 18, 2021 (See Addendum II.)
- Rebecca Baron presented: Recording timestamp **00:15:15**
Covid-19 Vaccine Update – November 15, 2021 (See Addendum III.)
- Tia Dostal presented: Recording timestamp **00:21:15**
Covid-19 Outbreaks in Agricultural Work Settings, Washington State, 2021 (See Addendum IV.)

H-2A Application Data ReportRecording timestamp **00:36:25**

Petra Meraz reported on H-2A application data. (See addendum V.)

ASWS Office Update – Oscar CerdaRecording timestamp **00:42:21**

Oscar Cerda delivered a high level overview of the ASWS Compliance team presentations, outreach visits and new staff members in Galen Hunt – Omak office and Arturo Espinoza – Kennewick office. We have three Compliance Specialist positions open in the following areas – Auburn, Yakima and Walla Walla.

Recommendations Updates – Tabled until next meeting so that all voting members are present. Discussion on the customer experience study recommendation did proceed.

Customer Experience Study

- Olga Kondratjeva presented: Recording timestamp **00:49:00**
Program Evaluation, Research & Analysis (PERA) Team Updates (See Addendum VI.)

Future Agenda Items

- 2020 Report Recommendation Update (to include continued Customer Experience Study discussion)
- 2022 Committee Planning
- LNI Staffing update
- Temporary Worker Housing(TWH) overview

Public Comments

Dan Fazio, Executive Director WAFLA (See Addendum VII)

Adjourned

Dan Zeitlin thanked everyone for their continued active participation and for their commitment to this work, then ended the meeting at 9:46 a.m.

2021 Meetings

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

- **December 16, 2021 – 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. – WebEx Meeting**

Addendums

ADDENDUM I.



AGENDA

Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services (ASWS) Advisory Committee

Thursday, November 18, 2021 | 8:30 am – 11:30 am | WebEx

TIME	TOPIC
8:30 am	Welcome – Dan Zeitlin, Director, ESD Employment System Policy & Integrity Division <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll Call – Tamara Johnson • Agenda Review – Dan Zeitlin
8:40 am	Approval of Meeting Minutes – Dan Zeitlin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 21, 2021
8:45 am	DOH Update – Todd Phillips, Tia Dostal, Kallie Kurtz and Heather Drummond <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Testing and Vaccinations • Outbreak Data
9:15 am	FLC Applications Update – Petra Meraz
9:20 am	ASWS Compliance Update – Oscar Cerda
9:35 am	BREAK
9:50 am	2022 Report – Dan Zeitlin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on current recommendations • Next steps
10:30 am	Closing Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next agenda items • Platform (Zoom or WebEx) • Frequency
10:40 am	Public Comments
11:00 am	Adjourn

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.



TESTING VACCINATION UPDATE -
AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

November 18, 2021

Main Branches of Testing

1. MTI will provide on-site testing at farms or temporary worker housing for incoming seasonal migrant agricultural workers
2. MTI will work in partnership with local health jurisdictions to coordinate additional testing efforts
3. Local health jurisdictions and community health centers are already providing additional testing supports
4. Expanded testing efforts to provide outbreak support and exit testing
5. Opportunities to partner with Care-a-Van to provide testing and vaccine clinics

Exit Testing

- Objective: testing opportunities for agricultural workers preparing to return home after growing season has ended
- Working with Medical Teams International to provide testing and agricultural worker outreach
- Can help fulfill testing requirement needed to return to countries requiring negative PCR tests on entry
- Provide safe isolation and indoor quarantine quarters with transportation assistance for positive individuals through DOH Isolation and Quarantine team

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Exit Testing

Free hotel stay and services available while you quarantine or isolate

If you need a safe place to stay while you quarantine or isolate, you can stay at Lakeview Inn in Centralia (56 miles to the south) for free. Washington State Department of Health runs the Inn as a place to quarantine and isolate for those who do not have a safe place to do so, including migrant workers, fishermen, and travelers.



The Department of Health will provide free transportation to and from the Inn if you are interested in quarantining or isolating before returning to your loved ones.

Lakeview Inn

1325 Lakeshore Dr.
Centralia, WA 98531
564-999-1963

Services Available

While you are at the hotel, you will receive the following services:



- **A personal room** with a refrigerator, microwave, cable, television, wi-fi, and phone
- **24/7 hospitality and medical services**, including COVID-19 testing as medically indicated
- **Food and drink**
- **Printing**
- **Letter of completion of isolation/quarantine** from DOH once recommended length of stay is completed to aid in travel
- **Prescriptions** picked up at a local pharmacy as prescribed by your doctor
- **Personal hygiene supplies**
- **Clothing**, if needed
- **Technical help booking flights, bus, train trips**, if needed
- **Transportation** to airport, bus, train, or other local destination

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Exit Testing

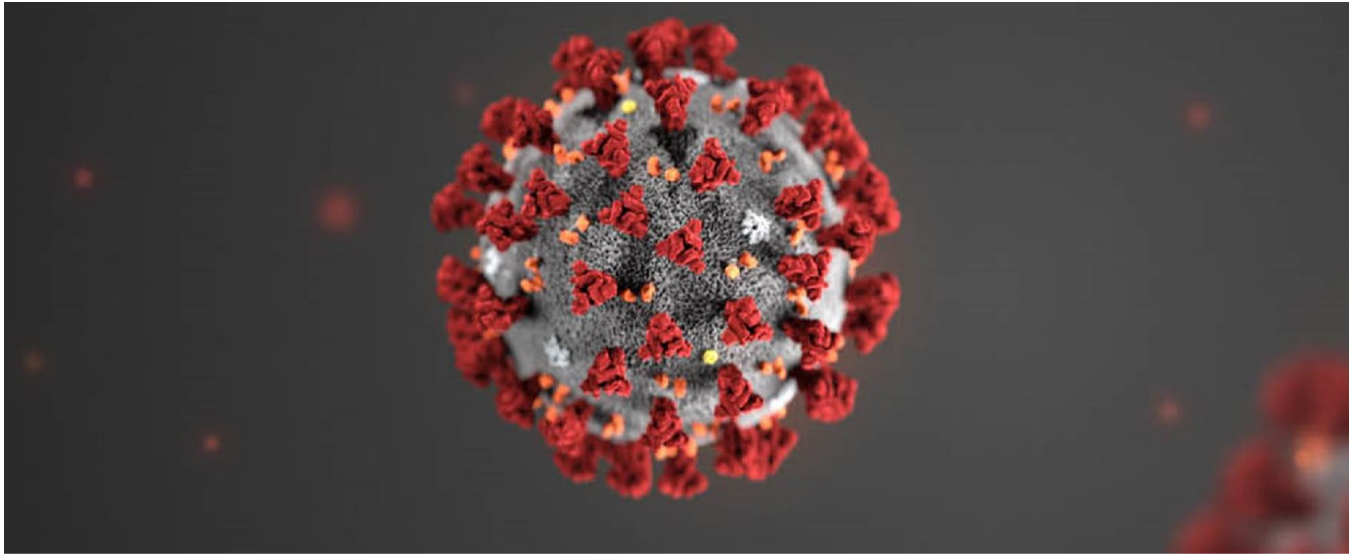
- MTI working on exit testing outreach with ESD assistance
- 6 Exit testing clinics performed from September – present
- Total 52 workers tested in Yakima and Grant County
- Majority of workers tested are returning to Central America where testing is required for re-entry

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	<p>Cost</p> <p>At present, there is no cost for participating in this initiative. DCH reserves the right to implement a cost-sharing program for future testing efforts, and the department will provide advanced notice of the details of any such changes.</p> <p>Arranging a Mobile Testing Event</p> <p>Employers, growers, and housing operators seeking to participate should contact Leslie Aaron, COVID-19 Clinic Manager, at laaron@medicalteams.org.</p> <p>Additional Information</p> <p>MTI has Spanish-speaking testing staff. Because staffing patterns vary, neither DCH nor MTI guarantee that bilingual staff will be available at every event.</p> <p>Participation in this program is not required under the agricultural rules issued by the Governor's Office, the Department of Health, or the Department of Labor & Industries. Positive cases from this testing effort will not automatically trigger the workforce testing requirement for outbreaks in agricultural settings. See section (g) here.</p> <p>This initiative is not associated with vaccine planning or distribution. Questions about vaccines can be directed to govd.vaccine@doh.wa.gov.</p> <p>MARCH 2021</p> <p>To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.</p>
<p>Agricultural Worker Testing Initiative 2021 Growing Season: Entrance</p> <p>General Information</p> <p>To help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in temporary worker housing units, the Washington State Department of Health is offering agricultural employers, growers, and housing operators an opportunity to have workers tested when they arrive in Washington. Recognizing that workers will be travelling from a number of communities in their home countries or from other states to live in congregate housing, DCH urges participation in this program. Together, we can promote a healthy start to the 2021 growing season.</p> <p>Interested employers, growers, and housing operators are able to arrange on-site testing of workers within the first week after arrival and a follow-up test about seven days later. The department has contracted with Medical Teams International (MTI) to meet the anticipated need. MTI has testing teams ready and available to rapidly deploy mobile testing sites throughout the state.</p> <p>Due to factors including irregular arrival patterns, delayed arrivals, and unforeseen circumstances, neither DCH nor MTI make any guarantee that testing will be available at a specific time or place. The department will attempt to coordinate with local health jurisdictions to fill in as many gaps possible.</p>	
 <p>DOH 426-327</p>	<p>Colin Maloney Testing Strategy Lead Disease Control and Health Statistics Washington State Department of Health Colin.maloney@doh.wa.gov 360-236-4076</p>

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ADDENDUM III.



COVID-19 Vaccine Update

ASWS Advisory Committee Meeting
November 15, 2021
Rebecca Baron

Agriculture & Food Production Vaccination Update

- To coordinate vaccination, DOH meets with:
 - LHJs
 - Community Based Organizations (CBOs)
 - Advocacy Groups
- Collaborative efforts with CBOs and FBOs continue to be the preferred method of vaccination outreach as we continue beyond much of the agriculture seasons.

Agriculture & Food Production Vaccination Update

- MTL conducts employer based vaccination clinics and testing
- As of the end of October, 6,454 vaccines administered at 264 clinics
- Other vaccination modalities:
 - Pharmacies,
 - LHJ clinics
 - Community Health Centers
 - Pop-up clinics

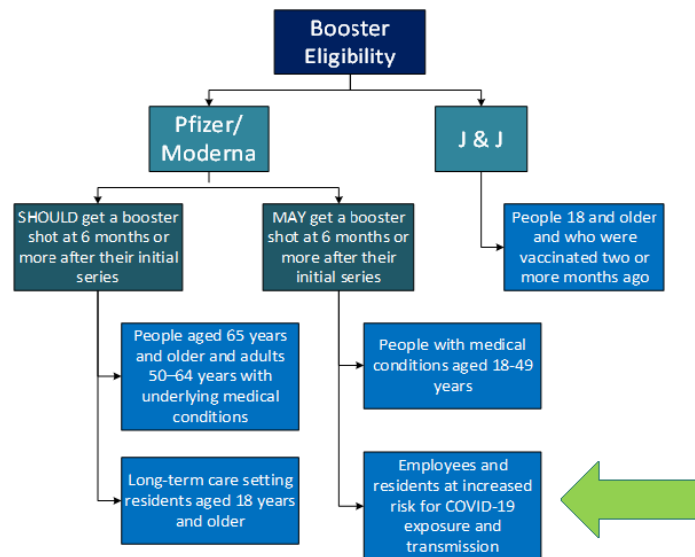
- 23,568 people have been vaccinated with the occupation listed as “Farmer”

Booster Vaccine Updates

Boosters Vaccine Presentations Available:

- Pfizer BioNTech
- Moderna
- J&J
- Ample supply of these vaccines for booster doses
- Pfizer, Moderna, and J&J formulations have now been approved for use in booster vaccines for certain populations.
- Currently, waiting for FDA approval for Pfizer vaccines for anyone over 18

Eligible Populations



Eligible Populations Cont.

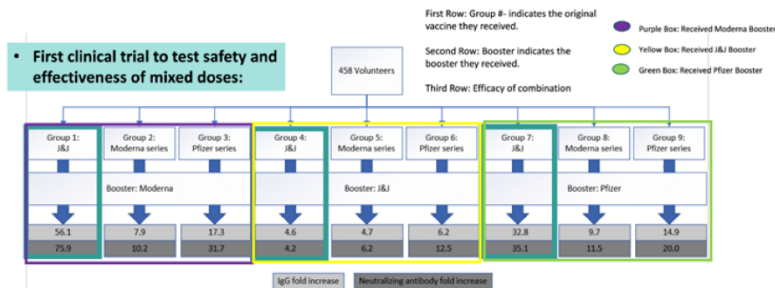
Examples of “employees at increased risk” category eligible for booster vaccines:

- First responders (e.g., healthcare workers, firefighters, police, congregate care staff)
- Education staff (e.g., teachers, support staff, daycare workers)
- **Food and agriculture workers**
- Manufacturing workers
- Corrections workers
- U.S. Postal Service workers
- Public transit workers
- Grocery store workers

Heterologous Booster Dosing (“Mix & Match”)

- “Mix & Match”= Eligible individuals may choose which vaccine they receive as a booster dose. Some people may prefer the vaccine type that they originally received, and others may prefer to get a different booster. CDC’s recommendations now allow for this type of mix and match dosing for booster shots.

Mixing COVID vaccine types: Safe, effective... authorized!



- FDA Authorized mixing of booster doses on 10/20/21
- Flexibility for workers, and for people vaccinated outside of the US

Access & Outreach

Services available by or in conjunction with DOH:

- Care-a-Van
- Contracted teams
- Mobile Nurse Teams
- Vaccination Staff Augmentation



ADDENDUM IV.



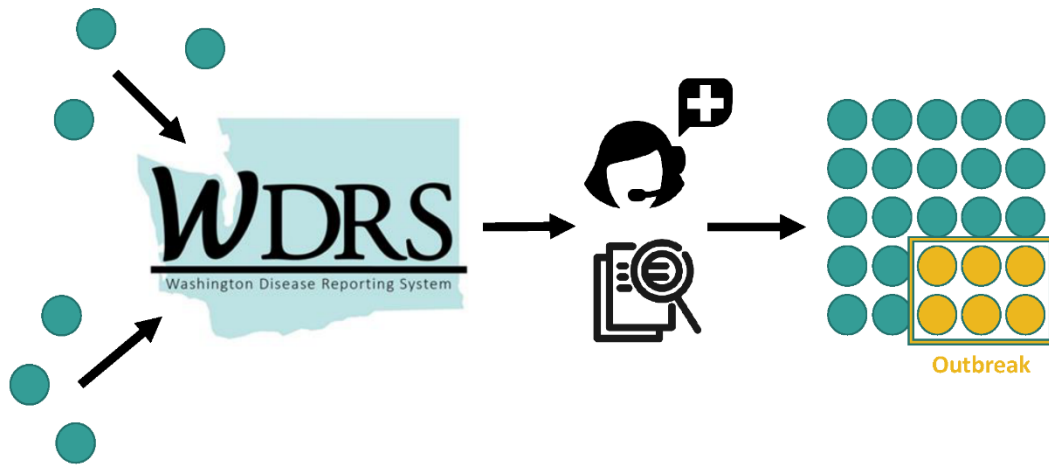
COVID-19 OUTBREAKS IN AGRICULTURAL
WORK SETTINGS, WASHINGTON STATE, 2021

Tia Dostal & Michelle Holshue
Washington State Department of Health

**Disclaimer: The data presented here are preliminary
and may change as we learn more.**

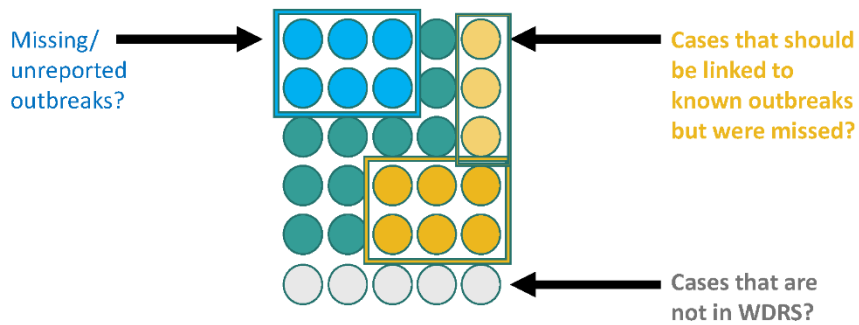


Cases must be reported to the Washington Disease Reporting System (WDRS) before they can be linked to **outbreaks**.



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The **cases** linked to **outbreaks** in WDRS may only represent PART of the picture.



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To declare a **COVID-19 outbreak** in non-healthcare congregate settings, the following three criteria must be true:

2 (or more) cases

Symptom/test within 14 days

Shared location

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Outbreaks in WDRS are classified by setting. There are 3 main agricultural settings we focus on in our reporting:

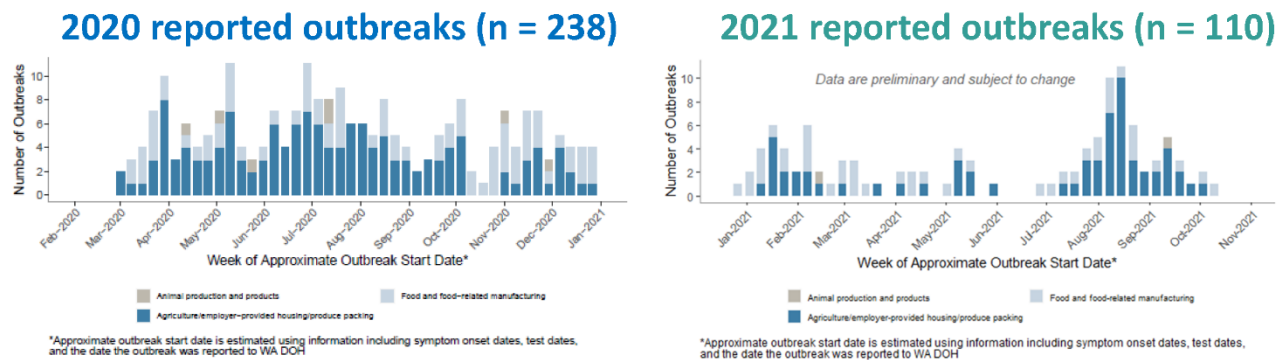
1. Agriculture/employer-provided housing/
produce packing

2. Food and food-related
manufacturing

3. Animal production
and products

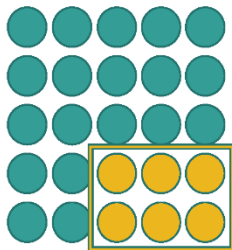


So far in **2021**, we have seen fewer reported outbreaks of COVID-19 in agricultural and food processing settings.



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More than 100 outbreaks of COVID-19 in agricultural settings have been reported to DOH so far in 2021

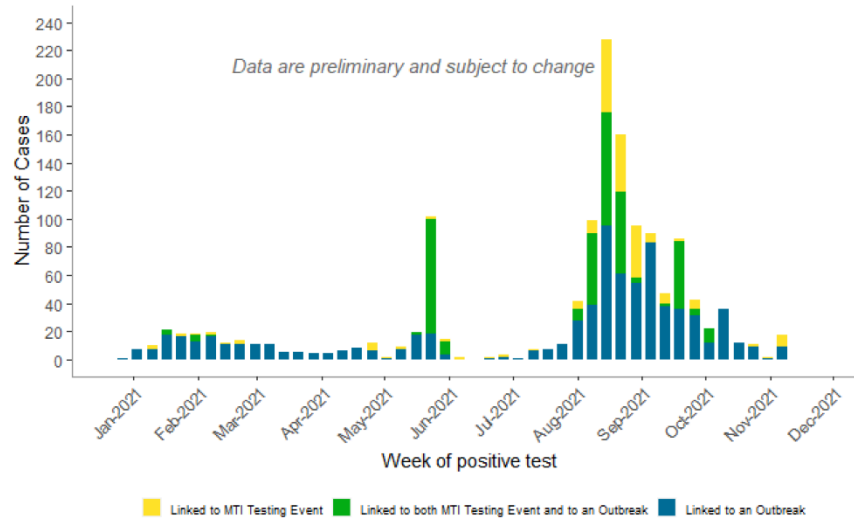


- **110 outbreaks** have been reported
- At least **963 cases** have been linked to these reported outbreaks
- Of these cases:
 - At least **23 cases** have been hospitalized
 - At least **4 people** died

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MTI testing efforts identified few cases of COVID-19 in H2A workers compared to the number of **cases linked to outbreaks in agricultural settings.**

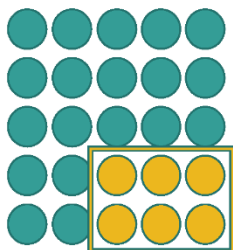
Recently, MTI has been requested to provide **outbreak testing.**



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28 outbreaks of COVID-19 associated with **agricultural employer-provided housing** settings have been reported to DOH so far in 2021

● **28 outbreaks** have been reported in these settings:



- Either reported as “H2A housing” OR “employer-provided agricultural worker housing”
- This does not guarantee that the other 82 outbreaks are not housing-related.

● **At least 411 cases** have been linked to these reported outbreaks. (May or may not be H2A workers)

- At least **2** cases have been hospitalized
- At least **1** person died

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ADDENDUM V.

FLC Application Data Report



2022 H-2A Program Data (10/1/2021- 11/18/2021)	2022		2021	
	Applications processed	Workers Requested	Applications processed	Workers Requested
Total Applications Received/Processed:	24	1,685	15	1207
Number of Applications Withdrawn/ Not Processed by DOL:	1	70	1	2
Contract Impossibility:	0	--	0	0
Total Number of Contracts Commenced:	7	217	3	92

*The numbers reported are not reflective of the number of foreign workers that actually arrive in Washington State.

ADDENDUM VI.

Program Evaluation, Research & Analysis (PERA) Team Updates



Customer Experience Study



▪ Key updates:

- Following up on the previous meeting, connected with three research centers to get itemized cost estimates for their proposals:
 - Western Washington University (Center for Economic & Business Research)
 - University of Washington (Survey Research Division)
 - Washington State University (Social & Economic Sciences Research Center)

▪ Caveats:

- Cost estimates provided in this presentation are not official.
- Assumptions and proposals differ by universities and may change in the future.

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Western Washington University



Main proposal:

- *Employers:* One-on-one in-depth qualitative interviews and focus groups (in-person or virtual, with incentives) with **180 employers**.
- *Agricultural workers:* Survey-like instruments to guide the discussion (1 hr, in-person, with incentives) with **517 workers**.
- Total estimated cost is \$325,238.

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Western Washington University



Alternative proposal #1:

- *Employers:* One-on-one in-depth qualitative interviews and focus groups (in-person or virtual, with incentives) with **100 employers**.
- *Agricultural workers:* Unchanged
- Total estimated cost is \$293,243.

Alternative proposal #2:

- Same as above, but the study would include **50 employers**.
- *Agricultural workers:* Unchanged
- 4 ▪ Total estimated cost is \$275,429.

University of Washington



Main proposal:

- *Employers:* 10-15 minute online survey followed by one-on-one qualitative interviews (in-person, with incentives) with **50 employers**.
- *Agricultural workers:* 10-15 minute online survey followed by one-on-one qualitative interviews (in-person, with incentives) with **50 workers**.
- Total estimated cost is \$214,022.

Alternative proposal:

- Same as above, but the study would include **100 employers** and **100 agricultural workers**.
- 5 ▪ Total estimated cost is \$242,232.

Washington State University



Main proposal:

- *Employers*: One-on-one qualitative interviews (1 hr, virtual, with incentives) with **40 employers**.
- *Agricultural workers*: One-on-one qualitative interviews (1 hr, in-person, with incentives) with **60 workers**.
- Total estimated cost is \$283,364.

Alternative proposal:

- Same as above, but the study would include **100 employers** and **100 agricultural workers**.
- 6 ▪ Total estimated cost is \$578,950.

Suggested Research Proposal



- Approximately **50 qualitative interviews with employers** (in-person or virtual, with incentives)
- Approximately **50 qualitative interviews with agricultural workers** (in-person, with incentives)
 - Cost estimates for focus groups may be cheaper.
 - Cost estimates can vary based on the number of interviews.
- Focus on three main crops/activities: apple and pear harvesting (August-November) and cherry harvesting (June-August).
- These crops/activities are based on the review of job orders – we'll review the job orders more closely prior to the study

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Suggested Budget



- Submitted cost estimates varied:
 - WWU: between \$275,429 and \$325,238.
 - UW: between \$214,022 and \$242,232.
 - Does not include instrument development and analysis.
 - ESD to design the questionnaire and analyze the data: 0.5 ORS FTE (\$110,000) and 0.2 IT Data Administration (\$50,000).
 - WSU: between \$283,364 and \$578,950.
- Suggested budget proposal:
 - Request funding in the amount of \$400,000.
 - Potential funding sources: Washington State Department of Agriculture upcoming grant proposal

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Recap



- **Caveats:**
 - Cost estimates provided in this presentation are not official.
 - Assumptions and proposals differ by universities and may change in the future.
- **Outstanding questions:**
 - Is conducting ~50 interviews with employers and ~50 interviews with agricultural workers sufficient from the Committee's point of view?
 - What are the additional funding sources we may consider for this work?

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ADDENDUM VII.

From: [Dan Fazio](#)
To: [Johnson, Tamara \(ESD\)](#); [Zeitlin, Daniel \(ESD\)](#)
Cc: [DeVaney, Jon \(ESD Partner\)](#)
Subject: Fwd: Wafla Comments
Date: Thursday, November 18, 2021 9:55:14 AM

External Email

Please include these comments in your records

Good morning. Thank you Dan for letting me speak.

My name is Dan Fazio, and I am the executive director of wafla. Wafla is a non-profit membership association who assists employers with all aspects of H-2A. The H-2A program is complex, and our goal is to make the employers who use the program the models for regulatory compliance. And of course we are tireless advocates for the H-2A program.

I am here today because of a letter from the Governor's office concerning discussions that originated in this committee. Specifically, a suggestion that a non-profit who receives government funding cannot work with associations like wafla, or for that matter any employer or association whose views are opposed by someone else.

The reason for this discussion is an op-ed I wrote with Medical Teams International. In the op-ed we explained how wafla and MTI had the simple idea that we could fight the virus better if we tested and vaccinated H-2A workers on arrival. We started work on the idea in late September 2020. I called MTI and asked if they could ramp up to do it, they said they could, if they received funding. MTI arranged a meeting with DOH, and DOH asked many questions, imposed some conditions, linked in the Governor's office and thankfully agreed to fund it.

The idea was embraced by the ag associations, farmers, DOH, ESD and L&I, all of whom did their part. Together, we made it happen. It was hugely successful. It saved lives and livelihoods. And that is the positive story about vaccinations and testing we told in the Op-Ed.

With that, I will ask you to rethink any suggestion that it is somehow okay to restrict access to programs for groups you don't agree with.

And I will turn the meeting back to you Dan. Thanks again for the opportunity to speak.

--

Sincerely,

Dan Fazio

CEO

p: (360) 455-8064 (x101)

H-2A Summit 2022 [Register now>](#)

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Contact information

Dan Zeitlin, Director of Employment System Policy & Integrity Division DZeitlin@ESD.WA.GOV
