



# Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Program

## FACT SHEET

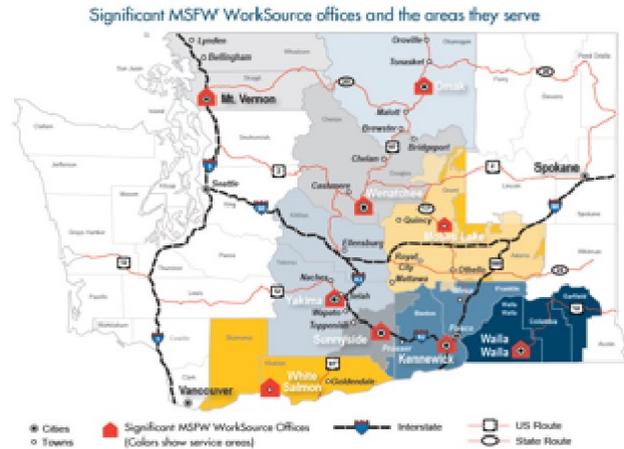
Migrant seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs) are vital to Washington’s agricultural production, especially during the peak harvest months of June through October.

A federal mandate (20 CFR 653.100) requires the Employment Security Department (ESD) to ensure that the workforce development system delivers to MSFWs employment services that are equivalent and proportionate to those provided to non-MSFWs. The federal mandate also ensures that MSFWs can access services in a way that meets their unique needs.

Because MSFWs experience barriers that often prevent them from being reached through normal office procedures, federal regulations require state workforce agencies to operate and oversee an outreach program aimed at serving MSFWs where they live, work and gather. ESD’s MSFW Program is aimed at increasing MSFW access to employment services and helping them acquire new skills for jobs that offer higher wages and more stability than seasonal agricultural work.

ESD must monitor its own compliance with these U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) regulations and report its performance quarterly.

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The nine significant MSFW WorkSource offices in Washington are: Central Basin (Moses Lake), Columbia Basin (Kennewick), Columbia Gorge (White Salmon), Okanogan (Omak), Skagit (Mt. Vernon), Sunnyside, Walla Walla, Wenatchee and Yakima (Union Gap).

### Significant MSFW offices

Washington is one of five states with the highest number of MSFW customers. We have nine “significant” MSFW WorkSource offices, defined by the USDOL as offices where at least 10 percent of its customers are MSFWs. Each significant MSFW office

employs full-time, year-round, bilingual staff to conduct outreach to MSFWs.





### **Agricultural Services Unit**

ESD's Agricultural Services Unit (ASU) is responsible for coordinating the MSFW and Foreign Labor (H-2A, H-2B) Certification programs statewide. The ASU is comprised of the director of the ASU, the Foreign Labor Certification coordinator and the Foreign Labor Certification specialist. All ASU employees are located in WorkSource offices across the state to best serve MSFW customers and agricultural employers.

### **State Monitor Advocate**

Washington state employs a full-time State Monitor Advocate (SMA), who conducts ongoing reviews of ESD's employment services delivery and the protections afforded to MSFWs by federal regulations. The SMA reports performance data to the USDOL and is also required to handle MSFW complaints; regularly meet with MSFW customers, agricultural employers and stakeholders; and advise ESD of problems, deficiencies and improper practices in its service delivery to MSFWs.

### **MSFW outreach staff responsibilities**

MSFW staff are responsible for conducting vigorous outreach to MSFWs where they work, live and gather. Outreach staff offer all services available at local WorkSource offices, including referrals to jobs and training, and support services. They also inform MSFWs about their basic rights, the rights of farmworkers, other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and how to file a complaint.

In addition, MSFW staff observe and report unlawful working and living conditions, and maintain complete records of contacts with MSFWs and possible violations observed.

### **Agricultural employer outreach**

MSFW outreach staff make frequent contact with agricultural employers to inquire about current labor needs and offer information about creating job orders with WorkSource. MSFW outreach and WorkSource business services staff refer qualified job seekers to agricultural employers and follow up with both to confirm job placement.

