



# Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services Advisory Committee

## Meeting details

**Date:** Thursday, April 16, 2020

**Time:** 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**Location:** Skype meeting due to COVID-19

### Committee members present

- Michele Besso
- Jonathan DeVaney
- Michael Gempler
- Rosalinda Guillen
- Rosella Mosby
- Delia Peña
- Erik Nicholson

### Committee members absent

- Ramon Torres

### ESD staff

- Dan Zeitlin
- Alberto Isiordia
- Gustavo Aviles
- Norma Chavez
- Tamara Johnson
- Rene Maldonado

### Non-voting agency representatives

- Alejandro Sanchez
- Anne Soiza
- Todd Phillips
- Uriel Iñiguez
- Ignacio Marquez
- Dave Gifford
- Maggie Leland
- Jeff Killip
- Christina Rodriguez
- April Amundsen
- Anne Soiza

## Summary

### Welcome and Introductions

Employment Security Department (ESD) Policy Director, Dan Zeitlin, welcomed everyone and asked them to introduce themselves.

### Agenda

Dan Zeitlin reviewed the agenda for the meeting and asked if anyone had any questions. There were no questions. (See Addendum I.)

### April 2, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Dan Zeitlin requested that everyone review the April 2, 2020 meeting minutes and provide their feedback. Michele Besso sent additions to Tamara for inclusion in the minutes. Meeting minutes will be corrected and presented at April 23, meeting for final approval.

**Economic Security Discussion (COVID-19):**

- L&I – Uriel Iniguez and Maggie Leland
  - Paid Sick Leave
  - Workers Compensation
- ESD Policy, Data, Performance and Integrity – Dan Zeitlin
  - Unemployment Insurance
- ESD Paid Family Medical Leave Program - April Amundson
  - Paid Family Medical Leave

\*\*Unidentified speaker

APRIL AMUNDSON (ESD): PFML is a supplemental benefit. The employer pays premiums, the state makes the determination of whether somebody had a qualifying event. The state is paying the benefits not the employer. There is a backlog of people waiting since the program went live.

Workers in Washington have access to a variety of paid leave in connection with the coronavirus pandemic. Along with Washington's paid sick leave law, workers also may be able to use leave covered under the Washington Family Care Act and the new Federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act is federal legislation that took effect April 1 and expires on Dec. 31. It covers protections such as paid sick leave, UI, and other benefits. This federal law requires public employers and private businesses with fewer than 500 employees to provide paid leave directly related to the coronavirus pandemic, either for the worker's own health needs or to care for family members.

There are 2 temporary benefits under the new federal law that employers must provide to address the coronavirus pandemic:

- 80 hours of emergency paid sick leave when an employee experiences certain COVID-19 events.
- Up to 12 weeks of leave to care for a child under a temporary expansion of the federal Family and Medical Leave Act.

Here are some additional elements of the expanded Family and Medical Leave Act:

- The first two weeks of emergency leave are unpaid, but a worker may choose to be paid using emergency paid sick leave or other accrued paid leave.
- The emergency leave is provided at the worker's regular rate of pay, or two-thirds of the regular rate when caring for a child, subject to certain caps.

ROSALINDA GUILLEN (CC): How is it going to work in reality? What about when someone appears to be sick and may not have been diagnosed with COVID-19, may not have been seen a doctor, but their employer sends them home because they have some symptoms? Or, an employee has someone who contracted it and they want to stay home, and they still have vacation and sick leave how do we treat that?

APRIL AMUNDSON (ESD): Employees will use up their vacation and sick leave first and then PFML.

DAN ZEITLIN (ESD): There is a helpful chart that ESD put out with L&I when the crisis hit. It is available on our website and has several different scenarios to help determine which program a worker might be eligible for.

MAGGIE LELAND (L&I): Workers compensation coverage can be considered a work-related exposure if: There is an increased risk or likelihood of contracting the condition.

The source of contact is what we consider.

- Health care workers or first responders are those that are most likely to be covered; Providing direct care to a person who has COVID-19
- Was contact likely due to contact with a family member or other members of the community?
- Can a worker identify a specific source or event during the performance of their job where they were exposed to the virus?
- Info on website – will send to committee

When we look at agricultural workers it seems that it would be likely, though it will be reviewed on a case by case basis with work-related evidence, that the claim should be accepted. The specific facts apply to the circumstances where a worker needs to be quarantined because, for example, they were near someone with the disease. If a worker believes they meet the criteria and they believe worker's compensation makes sense, then they should submit a claim.

It can be done online. To get the claims process going, even if there's not any information from a doctor. We can still work through getting that information as the claim progresses. There's some really good information on our website. There could be workers compensation benefits, as the information changes throughout the course of this pandemic.

MIKE GEMPLER (WGL): The employee should and usually does facilitate the call to the local clinic. They ask the person questions about what their symptoms are and they may tell them to stay home and if the symptoms get worse to call in again. The clinic does telephone triage to determine if that person should come into the clinic for a test. If it is determined they need to be tested, they have a person use a special entrance away from other people, give them the COVID-19 test and then send them back to where they were quarantined and wait for the results of the test. I think it can happen quickly because the clinics in the rural areas are there all geared up for it and they are all telling people what to do.

MAGGIE LELAND (L&I): There is good information on DOH's website as well that we can send that goes through questions around testing we'll be sure to send the information so you can also look it up.

DAN ZEITLIN (ESD): This is a historic moment in a lot of ways and that certainly is the case regarding the incredible influx we've seen in UI applications since the crisis began. We've been averaging up to or over 7 times the number of weekly UI (UI) applications than we did during the peak of the recession.

We've had over 1/2 million submit claims for UI which is really a historic number. Last week, we paid \$126 million over 255 thousand individuals filing for UI. This has been a big challenge for us as an agency. Staffing levels went from 300 to 500 this week and we should have 1000 folks handling claims starting next week. .

UI provides partial wage replacement for up to 26 weeks for individuals who have worked 680 hours in their base year, that's having worked 680 hours in the last four quarters or four or five quarters and are in covered employment. UI is financed by employers who pay an experience rated tax based on the number of workers they employ and social taxes as well to finance our state UI trust fund.

In 2019 we had 163,957 domestic workers in the agriculture industry that were covered or could be covered by the state UI system. That represents a little over 4% of total workers in all industries in our state. Individuals who are not covered or those who don't make that requirement to have work 680 hours in their base year are usually self-employed, independent contractors, or in an exempt occupation including farm students and interns, as well as small farms paying less than \$20,000 in wages per quarter. I should also note that undocumented workers are not covered by UI. .

Congress passed the second bill in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which gave ESD some emergency administrative funding to help manage the influx of claims and provided flexibility with some regular UI requirements.

We waived the waiting week; folks can get paid the first week they applied for UI. Legislation is allowing for flexibility of work search to collect UI (if off from your job through no fault of your own you're required to be able available and searching for work). Because of Stay Home Stay Safe order and the limited amount of economic activity we have temporarily waived the work search requirement and made it optional.

The CARES Act then made enormous changes to UI. It added three unemployment assistance programs: Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, additional amounts to provide along with a weekly benefit amount to those applying for UI, and an increase in the number of weeks for which one can claim UI.

The Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program is a program that was modeled after disaster unemployment assistance. Prior to this disaster if the President declared a major disaster in the state or an area impacted by disaster such as an earthquake or hurricane, Disaster, Unemployment Assistance would become available to those not normally covered by regular UI.

Congress authorized this Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program to similarly provide UI to independent contractors, the self employed, occupations that are exempt from our state statute or to those working less than 680 hours. It is authorized effective back to February 2nd and will run through the end of the year. We've had to do a lot of work updating our system to be able to accommodate these programs.

Another key piece of the CARES Act is the Pandemic Unemployment Compensation Program. If you are claiming any unemployment benefit for a week you will get an extra \$600 on that retroactive to March 29 and for the next four months.

Finally, Congress authorized a Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation Program which provides 13 additional weeks of UI. Again, our regular state UI program allows for up to 26 weeks of benefits and now with this authorization, up to 39 weeks of benefits will be available. As I mentioned at the top, our unemployment trust fund is financed by employers. These programs are all financed by the federal government. Payments made for that waiting week, for pandemic unemployment assistance, the extra \$600 a week, and the extra 13 weeks of coverage, those are all a huge influx of payments covered by the federal government

MIKE GEMPLER (WGL):: Has the UI advisory committee met yet to assess the impact on the UI system then do projections?

DAN ZEITLIN (ESD): We have not. I think our next projections come out in May. So why don't I take that as a request since you're on the committee and make sure that we have that meeting virtually. I can say that when we went into the crisis we had roughly 4.7 billion dollars in the trust fund. Obviously this is a historic influx of payments. I think that that's an important presentation.

MIKE GEMPLER (WGL):: I think that as a former member of that committee I think it's important for people to know that the Washington State fund is typically much healthier than the UI funds in other states and they've been conservative in their management. Our state should be able to weather this better than many other states.

DAN ZEITLIN (ESD): I would also second what you said about other states and that may lead to some action by Congress in future federal bills. States can take out interest free loans for up to three years. Congress may look at that issue given the impact this is having across trust funds throughout the nation but as Mike said we have a strong trust fund.

ERIK NICHOLSON (UFW): We looked at the number of referrals ESD was making to agricultural employers that were soliciting H2A workers. I'm wondering what kind of visibility you have in terms of having those numbers and any increase in referrals?

ALBERTO ISIORDIA (ESD): We have been having those conversations already to change the referral system and try to improve job orders and how we're recruiting for domestic workers. We have already made some suggestions to the offices in relation to virtually contacting the employers and workers when new job orders are received.

MICHELE BESSO (NWJP): There's been ongoing issues around access by farm workers to the web-based UI system. Can you also provide information on how many people have applied for UI benefits.

DAN ZEITLIN (ESD): I will check with our operations folks to see if that's a data point that we can track. You're asking how many have applied in the agriculture industry and what percentage are from agriculture that have been approved?

MIKE GEMPLER (WGL): Regarding the undocumented issue, employers accept documents from employees to prove their identity and eligibility, and as far as they know they are legal and authorized to work in United States. If somebody is using false documentation, unknown to the employer, if that person applies for UI is ESD using the E-Verify system or anything else to check an applicant's authorization to work in the US and an eligibility for UI?

DAN ZEITLIN (ESD): If a person files a claim then they must provide employment authorization documentation that is automatically checked with the USCIS SAVE program.

DAN ZEITLIN (ESD): We are going to move on to a discussion about health and safety.

ANNE SOIZA (L&I): Our goal especially for COVID-19 is to get our most serious complaints assigned for inspection within 24 hours. Our factsheets will be issued in English and Spanish; we will be translating it into other languages as well as we as we go forward. We want them to be useful to help employers and employees understand what to do when it comes to keeping themselves safe. We tried to be very clear about what is required and what are suggestions and ideas on how to accomplish those requirements

because we want to make sure that they have some ideas about how to accomplish those requirements. We did include our consultation services to help employers provide a safe and healthy worksite.

ERIK NICHOLSON (UFW): Is there an obligation on the employer to inform employees of the presence of a COVID-19 positive supervisor or co-worker without disclosing their name?

JON DEVANEY (WSTFA): My understanding this the local health districts are supposed to do a trace exposure and then contact those individuals directly. The concern that I've heard from a number of growers especially when you have employees who live or work in different adjacent counties is that those County Health Department policies are not necessarily consistent.

MICHELE BESSO (NWJP): I am trying to understand if there was possible exposure who had tested positive and you just send people home without any information. How will they know whether they need to be taking precautions; whether they might have been exposed to the virus?

ANNE SOIZA (L&I): We want employers to follow their local health department recommendations with the handling of their worker population and their contact tracing.

MICHELE BESSO (NWJP): I'm trying to determine is there a cleaner more direct line between the State Department of Health guidelines and relationship between local county health departments.

ERIK NICHOLSON (UFW): I've been watching with concern is going on at Tyson and I think it would be good if L&I had direct oversight in terms of what the counties are doing. We need to make sure we have a strong enforcement. When we've got a very clean enforcement mechanism in terms of making sure that the counties are doing what they are supposed to do, then employers are in compliance, and if they are not, we know.

ANNE SOIZA (L&I): We expect them to cooperate with the local health department but also if they have an employee who gets too sick to work, they must have procedures to follow. They handle with the medical advice that is an effect at that time. Employers must require separate places, to stay home or stay in isolation.

MIKE GEMPLER (WGL): The second bullet point says develop a process for immediate shutdown in the case a sick employee was present. When you say sick employees does that mean someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or someone who is suspected?

ANNE SOIZA (L&I): If somebody is sick because they they're coughing and have a fever, displaying flu-like symptoms, in that case a good best practice would be to develop a process that includes immediate shutdown of the areas, thoroughly sanitizing and then open it back up again.

BREAK FROM 10:55 – 11:15

**COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidance:**

- DOH – Todd Phillips and Dave Gifford
- L&I – Uriel Iniguez and Maggie Leland
- WSDA – Ignacio Marquez
- ESD – Norma Chavez

DAN ZEITLIN (ESD): I understand recent legal actions were filed therefore L&I and Department of Health are unable to further talk about the housing health and safety guidance. I'm going to suggest that we pivot to a discussion about H2A program. I think we can do this by taking any questions that members may have about the H2A program and Norma can let us know what she's doing to stand up the office.

MICHELE BESSO (NWJP): I'd love to get an update from Norma as to who she's got working with her and what they're doing.

NORMA CHAVEZ (ESD): We started with having monthly meetings, but with COVID-19 we have transitioned to having weekly meetings so we could update committee members, interested parties, and other state agencies and what we're doing to help during the pandemic.

I'm hoping that we can get back to the business. I started with ESD on January 2nd, 2020. The office quickly developed in the last 2 1/2 months. We have three transfers into the FLC positions, Cara Mia Stearns-Vance, Ana Alcalá-Rodríguez and Petra Meraz. We also have our Washington State Monitor Advocate, Rene Maldonado, moved to the ASWS group. I think the thought process was that since he's doing monitoring it would be more of a natural fit to be under a compliance unit. We also had Tamara Johnson transfer as our Administrative Assistant.

The conversations we're having now are for our compliance unit. Looking at the numbers right now and looking at the services we provide we will have people more strategically placed based on applications that we have in specific areas. FLC staff are training offices to make sure that those job orders are coming through and trying to beef up the effort with what they're doing for recruitment and referrals.

RENE MALDONADO (ESD): We are working diligently right now to ensure that workers are made aware of resources. We've been leveraging our staff, they have been calling on workers, calling employers, providing services, and finding out what is needed out in the community.

DAN ZEITLIN (ESD): One thing I want to note about Rene joining Norma's office, it made sense as there is an alignment in vision and mission between the State Monitor Advocate and the work Norma's office is doing, but funding wise Renee is funded through Wagner-Peyser.

NORMA CHAVEZ (ESD): Thank you for noting that as that's an important piece of information having also started having conversations with Kelly Lindseth in Employment Connections on how we're going to deal with some of the business needs and changes that we foresee.

DAN ZEITLIN (ESD): To follow through on what Norma said this is an advisory committee and we welcome suggestions here today on how you see the role of this office and the migrant seasonal farmworkers. Our world has changed significantly since this office was established and that includes not only potential impacts to the H2A program but also domestic workers.

MICHELE BESSO (NWJP): Can you give us any changes or any proactive actions you're taking to recruit domestic workers right now; why not slow down the approval of H2A applications?

NORMA CHAVEZ (ESD): We've been having weekly discussions with our outreach staff on making contacts as some of you had suggested in prior meeting.

Working with the employers and workers, making sure referrals are being made and the job leads are solid. I think part of that is having conversations with our communications manager and trying to coordinate with L&I and DOH so there isn't as much confusion when putting out communications. Some of our outreach workers are using Facebook and have started talking to people that have communicated with them to obtain jobs. I think that we could see what type of numbers we're seeing in changing some of our approach. As far as more labor certifications are coming, USDOL is in charge of the program but at this point they have not stopped labor certification applications. Employers could go straight to USDOL to make application, so they have the choice of not going through Washington.

The MSW significant offices are starting to communicate with those that have not participated prior but you have H2A job orders in non MSFW offices too and that's where I indicated we're starting to train them done office by office.

MICHELE BESSO (NWJP): I know it's difficult I mean we're working under such strange circumstances, but I just wondered if there is if you're seeing interest in the community for jobs?

ALBERTO ISIORDIA (ESD): Work source offices are physically closed so that may have an impact as well on our ability to steer people to jobs. In terms of how we measure the interest out in the community, we do track any requests for jobs. There are a lot of questions on L&I and how to access UI and get help. If you want more of a detailed list of what's been asked, we can add that for next week for the committee to review.

MIKE GEMPLER (WGL): This is a ramp up time for agriculture and people are being hired to work. I'm not aware of many people, if any, being laid off. There might be individual farms that are experiencing some market failure due in part to the food service sector collapsing, but now is when we're hiring.

ALBERTO ISIORDIA (ESD): From an operations perspective we are working very closely with our UI division given the unprecedented number of claims that have been filed. We continue to have staff engage with partners and with farmworkers.

MICHELE BESSO (NWJP): I'm still interested in following up on the idea of having information pulled together to give to H2A workers on their arrival because I am concerned that they will come and not have gotten the all the messaging they need to have in terms of prevention. Also, do we want to discuss as a group Health Department reporting and whether we want to make an ask for uniformity in that whole process?

NORMA CHAVEZ: We have been collecting some information from about nine health districts right now and you're right the information is different in each district.

JON DEVANEY (WSTFA): I think that was clear from the guidance that we saw earlier from L&I. I don't know that we can get a single document with all appropriate points of contact statewide. It might be better to reinforce the requirement, that every employee needs to be trained on these measures and resources and leave it up to individual employers to make sure that they have the local health district contact information.

MICHELE BESSO (NWJP): I think one of my real concerns is that the workers understand the connection to clinics, and the health district to be able to be able to consult if they do have symptoms. It is important that it is easily legible. Mostly infographics about steps to protect themselves. My last concern was making

sure workers understand some of the benefits they might be eligible for if they can't work. I know it's a concern they don't tend to have money on them and so if H2A workers can't work for two weeks they're going to be out of food.

MIKE GEMPLER (WGL): I received an email last night from L&I on bunk bed safety. They denied it as written, but I have a call scheduled with them. We need to work out the details so that they fully understand what we mean. I think they thought that our beds were still 3 feet apart, when they are 6 feet or more.

ROSELLA MOSBY (MF): It's an economically ruinous decision. We want to prevent any outbreak, we don't want anybody to get sick, so we must find ways to accomplish social distancing and still have the people we need to work. I think that's the balance.

ROSALINDA GUILLEN (CC): If there's no place for them to live they're not coming up and, it's been slower than usual there's been significant delays, they're not coming up as they were scheduled to come up because of delays in Mexico; mostly due to logistical issues so people are weeks or even months late.

\*\* : It would be helpful to know what the reality of the arrival date for these workers is, in what regions they are arriving because I think that that gives us the focus of trying to understand where we need to expedite some of these services.

ERIK NICHOLSON (UFW): We need to figure it out and implement whatever rules and regulations need to be done to make it happen so that people can trust the system right now.

NORMA CHAVEZ (ESD): We can provide information as to the change of requests and the request of workers and those contracts, however we cannot indicate the number of workers that are coming because there's no port of entry where we could substantiate those numbers.

MICHELE BESSO (NWJP): Is there a mechanism to say "x" amount of workers arrived in Washington and they arrived in this County? Farmers should have a tally on the numbers.

NORMA CHAVEZ (ESD): We would have to go to each employer and start asking that on a regular basis, but is it possible.

MIKE GEMPLER (WGL): I think people could voluntarily report the number of people they got in and that were able to cross the border, it's a possibility and there are several different agents and individuals who are facilitating crossing the border. Could we put out a request to all growers who have submitted applications for an update on how many people have crossed?

JON DEVANEY (WSTFA): County health districts have reached out to me making sure that they have the contact information for growers in their area. They are sending out advisories through multiple channels to major counties. The local health districts know where H2A workers are planning to be and who those employers are so that they have communication, they are tracking statistical information on how and what percentage of scheduled workers have arrived, and where there have been delays.

DAN ZEITLIN (ESD): We will take it as an action item to provide the data that we do have, the number of workers projected to come, and where they are located; and from employers willing to share, we will find out how many actually arrive.

MIKE GEMPLER (WGL): There was a statement made earlier that L&I can't comment on farm worker safety issues any further because of recent legal action. Can someone give more details on who filed it what's going on?

MAGGIE LELAND (L&I): We were trying to summarize we weren't going to talk anymore about the temporary worker housing guide and in part because we are still working on those and we also have a writ of mandamus request to do emergency rules so there's current legal action.

MIKE GEMPLER (WGL): Can you tell us who?

MAGGIE LELAND (L&I): I believe some of the parties are currently in this meeting.

ERIK NICHOLSON (UFW): UFW is a one of the parties.

DAN ZEITLIN (ESD): Our report is due to the legislature in October, so I'd like to suggest that we start to focus more on those issues at the next meeting. More discussion about domestic workforce and recruitment. We want to start talking about budget issues beginning with our foreign labor certification grant. I'd like to go around to each member and get their thoughts on what they would like to discuss at the next meeting.

JON DEVANEY (WSTFA): We need to get back to our action items. I would like additional discussion but if we can't talk about with the agencies about some of these issues, that we are working on then there's not a point.

MAGGIE LELAND (L&I): Again, it's not that we can't or won't talk about it, we just don't have any updates from what we've talked about in the past.

MIKE GEMPLER (WGL): The next meeting I just think we need to deal with the most important issues at hand and in particular the response of the agencies preventing outbreaks in agriculture industry and how we can work together to do that while protecting jobs and not doing significant damage to the industry.

ERIK NICHOLSON: I think we should meet next week as we've got some pending items that Alejandro is going to forward about isolation camps. I would welcome having a conversation about an opportunity to leverage some of the 9.5 billion dollars that's been allocated to bailout specialty crops.

DELIA PENA (ZFC): I agree with continuing the discussions.

DAN ZEITLIN (ESD): I'm hearing a majority want to continue discussing these issues on a regular basis so we will put more time on the calendar next week.

~End discussion

### **Agenda Items for Next Meeting**

- COVID-19
- ASWS Office Update
- FLC Grant 101

**Public Comments**

Dan Fazio – Wafra

Eddie Kasner – UW School of Public Health (Addendum II.)

**Closing Comments**

Dan Zeitlin thanked everyone for their continued active participation and for their commitment to this work, then ended the meeting at 12:44 a.m.

**2020 Meetings**

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

- **April 23, 2020 – 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**  
**Skype Meeting**

Addendums

ADDENDUM I



Agenda

Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services (ASWS)  
Advisory Committee

Thursday, April 16, 2020 | 8:30 am – 12:30 pm | SKYPE

Agenda Items

TIME	TOPIC
8:30 am	Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome from Dan Zeitlin, Director, ESD Policy, Data, Performance and Integrity Division &amp; Norma Chavez, Director – Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services</li> <li>• Agenda Review</li> </ul>
8:35 am	Approval of April 2, 2020 Meeting Minutes
8:40 am	Governor’s Office – Alejandro Sanchez <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updates</li> </ul>
9:10 am	<u>Economic Security Discussion (COVID-19):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L&amp;I – Uriel Iniguez and Maggie Leland                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Paid Sick Leave</li> <li>○ Workers Compensation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• ESD Policy, Data, Performance and Integrity – Dan Zeitlin                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Unemployment Insurance</li> </ul> </li> <li>• ESD Paid Family Medical Leave Program - April Amundson                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Paid Family Medical Leave</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
10:40 am	BREAK (20 min)
11:00 am	<u>COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidance:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DOH – Todd Phillips and Dave Gifford</li> <li>• L&amp;I – Uriel Iniguez and Maggie Leland</li> <li>• WSDA – Ignacio Marquez</li> <li>• ESD – Norma Chavez</li> </ul>
12:15pm	<u>Discuss next meeting agenda:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASWS Office Update</li> <li>• FLC Grant 101</li> </ul>
12:25 pm	Public Comments
12:30 pm	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

**PACIFIC NORTHWEST AGRICULTURAL  
SAFETY AND HEALTH CENTER**DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
& OCCUPATIONAL  
HEALTH SCIENCESUNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON  
School of Public Health

April 22, 2020

Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services Advisory Committee,

The 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak presents extraordinary challenges to agricultural producers and workers who are part of the essential workforce under federal and state orders. While thousands of workers arrive in the Northwest and the labor force ramps up activities in the coming weeks, the industry has been tasked with navigating rapidly changing information about safely managing day-to-day operations. Resources are needed for proper infection control, mitigation of farmworker vulnerabilities, and mental health support for producers, workers, and their families as they grapple with sustained economic, social, and environmental pressures of the pandemic.

The Pacific Northwest Agricultural Safety and Health (PNASH) Center conducts research and promotes best safety and health practices for Northwest producers, workers, and communities. PNASH supports the coordinated efforts and alignment of the Washington State Departments of Health, Labor and Industries, Agriculture, and Employment Security Department. We offer our technical assistance to find practical solutions and echo the set of immediate concerns listed in [your letter to Governor Inslee](#) (p.10) last month. It is essential to reduce the number of cases and deaths. To achieve this requires actions far beyond traditional health and safety practices. We urge the Committee to help identify solutions for three items of critical importance:

**Facilities for adequate hand washing and disinfection in fields and housing areas must be present.** Workers need clear guidance that they should be washing frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This behavior reduces transmission. We encourage employers and employees to exercise continuous reasonable efforts to ensure disinfection protocols are maintained in housing areas.

**Physical distancing of 6 feet or more is critical for all aspects of farmworker life: field work, transportation, and housing.** Emerging scientific evidence shows that SARS-CoV-2 is shed to the environment as expired particles, during toileting, and through contact with fomites. Solutions are needed for preventing transmission through direct and indirect contact, especially indoors.

**Immediate access to medical care for workers exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms.** Symptomatic workers need to be removed from the workplace and provided with appropriate health care. Isolation, contact tracing, and screening protocols should be clear and coordinated with local and state public health authorities. To the greatest extent possible, affected workers should be supported financially until their illness passes.

These solutions must involve educating workers in the language they understand best about preventing transmission. We stand ready to leverage resources from health science and land grant universities connected to our center and the national network of [U.S Centers for Agricultural Safety and Health](#) funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Please contact us if we can be of any help with this public health emergency.

Sincerely,

PNASH Internal Advisory Committee (undersigned)

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Catherine J. Karr, MD, PhD, MS  
Investigator, Professor



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