

# Department of Career Services

## PY' 2012 - Agricultural Outreach Plan

### A. Assessment of Need.

Within the Wagner-Peyser framework, the role of the Department of Career Services and the Massachusetts One-Stop Career Center System (OSCCs) is to provide workforce and labor exchange services to the agricultural community and in particular agricultural workers. To that end, the Department of Career Services and the MA One-Stop Career Centers work with employers, employer organizations, farmworkers, farmworkers advocates, health services providers, legal aid and other state and local agencies or organizations.

As required by 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.107, the Department of Career Services (DCS) will provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded services to migrant and seasonal workers and to prospective and actual employers of these individuals. DCS will make every effort to strengthen its working relationships with MSFWs groups or organizations, WIA 167 Grantee and employers to better serve this targeted population. Efforts will continue to include inter/intra-state job order servicing and the full range of One-Stop Career Center services delivered via an outreach staff designed to locate, contact, and inform migrant and seasonal farmworkers about the nature and availability of services at the state-wide network of One-Stop Careers Centers.

### A. Assessment of need

#### i Previous year's agricultural activity in the State.

In terms of revenue generated Massachusetts' top five agricultural products are greenhouse and nursery products, cranberries, dairy products, sweet corn, and apples. A detailed summary of agricultural statistics (statewide and by county) is available in Massachusetts Department of agriculture webpage (<http://www.mass.gov/agrfacts/>) under the heading "*fingertip facts*". The following highlights the state of agriculture in Massachusetts:

- Massachusetts is 2nd in New England for direct sales of farm products to consumers. At \$42M in direct sales, Massachusetts farmers were responsible for 40 percent of New England's total.
- Massachusetts ranks 9th nationally in total value of direct sales, following states such as California, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, and Washington.
- Massachusetts ranks 2nd nationally in value of average direct market sales at \$25,356 per farm.
- More than 80% of Massachusetts farms are family-owned. Over 95% fit the category of "small farms", sales below \$250,000.
- Massachusetts ranks 1st in the U.S. for farmland value at \$12,202 per acre.
- Female farm operators account for 29% of the farm operators in MA, up from 21% in 2002.
- Massachusetts increased number of organic farms from 129 in 2002 to 295 in 2007, and organic sales from \$7.8M in sales in 2002 to \$17.5M in 2007.
- Agritourism income totaled \$5.3M, up from \$665,000 in 2002.

Sources: Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources / NASS / 2007 Census of Agriculture.

For the 2011 calendar year, a total of 89 agricultural employers placed a total of 155 job listings with MA DCS, a small decrease from the previous year. The 155 listings represent 565 job openings which resulted in 25 local hires.

ii Previous year's MSFW activity

Currently there is no single agency or organization that tracks the number of migrant or seasonal farmworkers in the nation. The estimates made by U.S. DOL through the National Agricultural Worker Survey (NAWS) are generic in nature and do not assist in the calculations for each individual state. Therefore the best employment estimates for MA are found on table 7 (Hired Farm Labor – Workers and Payroll) of the 2007 Census of Agriculture ([http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full\\_Report](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full_Report)).

According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture (see attachment A) there are 13,039 hired farm workers in MA and the highest 5 counties reporting activity are: Middlesex (2,282), Worcester (1,740), Franklin (1,578), Plymouth (1,318) and Hampshire (1,315), followed closely by Bristol (1,073), Hampden (944) and Essex (918). It is important to note that Hampden and Hampshire Counties have suffered the loss of a number of employers due to the downsizing of the tobacco industry.

These farm employment estimates should be seen as a base with agricultural employment likely to be much higher than the stated numbers. The “peak” of employment varies for each crop activity but in general we find that peak employment is reached between the months of July and August. The average estimated employment for last year was 13,500. Based on DCS employment data for the H-2A Program the trend of slight decreases each year continues.

iii **A projected level of agricultural activity in the State for the coming year.**

With the pressure from overseas production where labor and regulatory impact are significantly lower and the options for mechanization are impractical or expensive the diversification of crop activities at local farms continues. In an effort to remain a viable business many of MA agricultural employers are harvesting crops that keep the farm in operation for longer periods of time than in the past. In fact, many operators remain open year round providing all sort of local produce or imports from other states to satisfy consumers' demands.

The implementation of new technologies and expanding immigrant population may open up market conditions to sustain a viable agricultural sector. However, many other external factors continue to affect agriculture in MA, such as market fluctuations, consumer demands, immigration policies, etc. As a result, we are estimating that agricultural activities in the state will remain at similar levels with a possibility that economic growth may lead to a more active agricultural economy thus expanding the need for labor.

iv A projected number of MSFWs in the State for the coming year.

The number of migrant or seasonal farmworkers in the state continues to be a moving target. As mentioned above, there are no concrete numbers quantifying the workers engaged agriculture. A factor such as the transient nature of the migrant workforce, legal status and the underground economy makes it difficult to enumerate this sector of the workforce. Taking into consideration, the Census of Agriculture data for the last 3 years, we can estimate that number MSFWs in the state will remain at similar levels as in 2011.

U.S. DA, NASS, Census of Agriculture				
Year	1992	2002	2007	Projected
Hired Workers	13930	13545	13039	13000

v A statement of the consideration given to the State Monitor Advocate's (SMA) recommendation

In accordance with 20 CFR Subpart B, Part 653.107 and as prescribed by TEGL 11-21, the State Monitor Advocate participated in the preparation of the Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP) and has been afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the plan. Such review indicates that the plan has been prepared properly, omitting none of the prescribed requirements and properly describing the activities planned for providing services to both agricultural employers and migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs).

All recommendations were included as the State Monitor Advocate presented them in the annual MSFW summary developed under 20 CFR 653.108(t) in the preparation of this plan.

**B. Outreach Activities.**

The Department of Career Services will conduct outreach activities to locate and to inform migrant and seasonal farmworkers about the core, intensive, and training services available through the Massachusetts One-Stop Career Center system. Currently, the Massachusetts Department of Career Services has no designated outreach positions for Program Year 2012. The State Monitor Advocate (SMA) is available to assist DCS staff in the conduct of outreach activities. The number of staff positions assigned to outreach is the same as last year. The geographic area covered by outreach staff and the State Monitor Advocate is much larger than the jurisdiction of the local offices that they assist.

Staff providing outreach services will continue to be 1 bilingual Central Office employee. To help ensure equity of service, the efforts of the Central Office outreach worker may be supplemented by local office Business Service Representatives (BSRs), in areas of the state where significant migrant outreach workloads warrant additional assistance. BSRs are based at local One-Stop Career Center sites and can bring to the agricultural employers the full array of services, as well as program specific information relevant to partner organizations such as the WIA 167 grantee and other appropriate labor market information. This is accomplished in large part through conducting employer-coordinated visits to farms and food processing facilities. In-office services are continuously available, with evening hours at a number of locations.

It is DCS's goal to contact a significant number of MSFWs with the maximum utilization of resources available. Local offices, having farm labor camps in their service areas, will be designated to contact agricultural employers and offer labor recruitment assistance via the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) or the H-2A Program and to ascertain the employer's workforce needs.

Most of the recruitment activities occur between the months of March and May and July and August. Outreach services will be recorded by outreach staff, or other appropriate staff, on the Daily Log of Outreach Activity. The information collected on the form will allow DCS staff to target efforts in areas where the need is identified.

For the 2012 Program Year emphasis will be placed on developing effective partnerships with the WIA 167 Grantee, Migrant Education, Migrant Health and others to leverage resources to help identify and service the agricultural community including the MSFWs.

**i Numerical goals for the number of MSFWs to be contacted during the fiscal year**

The Department of Career Services will make an estimated 100 outreach contacts during PY 2012. We estimate that at least 50 contacts will be made by the SMA with the remaining contacts made by outreach staff and the cooperating agency. The total number of staff days to be expended by DCS outreach staff will be 15. This will represent 100% increased in the number of staff days devoted to outreach during the last program year.

The number of MSFWs contacts and staff days devoted to outreach activities by the WIA 167 agency will be determined once they filed their report, DCS and NEFWC are in the process of renewing the Non-Financial Agreement as required under the WIA. Based on historical data, it is expected that they will be identifying approximately 500 workers and that they would spent a cumulative of 50 staff days conducting outreach activities.

Projected Goals	
Organization	Contacts
DCS / OSCCs	100
WIA 167 Grantee	500

**ii Numerical goals for the staff days to be used for outreach during the fiscal year.**

Outreach will be accomplished through personal contact and cooperative agreements with private and public agencies. DCS and the One-Stop Career Centers will continue to establish new linkages and use existing relationships with local and statewide networks to solicit information and suggestions from these groups on how to better serve the MSFW population. The table below shows the projected number of days to be utilized conducting outreach.

Assigned Outreach Workers	MSFW Contacts	Number of Staff Days
1	100	40

**iii The level of W-P funding to be used for outreach during the fiscal year.**

To accomplish the maximum level of outreach activities, at least a part-time outreach worker position will be assigned at the DCS Central Office. The outreach worker will specifically target those areas where there is significant agricultural activity and where a large number of job applicants are expected to be MSFWs. The outreach worker will be trained in the recruitment and provision of services will be available directly through the One-Stop Career Center system. The SWA will consider and be sensitive to the preferences, needs and skills of individual MSFWs and the availability of jobs and training opportunities.

**iv The tools which will be used to conduct outreach contacts.**

Outreach workers will make personal contacts with MSFWs as time and resources allowed to explain the services available through the One-Stop Career Centers and other agencies or organizations that provide services to MSFWs. Outreach workers will visit sites where farmworkers work, live and congregate, including, but not limited to; pickup points, migrant health clinics and Legal Service offices, in order to contact the as many MSFWs as possible. Informational printed materials will be distributed at these locations to maximize penetration into the farmworker community. Follow-up contacts will be made with those MSFWs registered to ensure that the needs have been met and to determine if any other services are needed.

Outreach activities will be documented on the Log of Daily Outreach Activities. The log form includes the number of MSFWs contacted, the amount of time expended, the services provided and information on complaints received. The outreach workers will utilize standard forms such as the job application, complaint forms and logs of apparent violations. Monthly reports (see attachment B) that summarize all outreach efforts and activities will be submitted to the State Monitor Advocate. These reports will include an analysis of the outreach activities performed by the outreach worker on a qualitative and quantitative basis and a summary of the total One-Stop Career Center outreach effort. Monitoring of the outreach activities will be conducted to assess and report on the equivalence of services provided.

**C. Services Provided to MSFWs through the One-Stop Delivery System.**

In an integrated service delivery system MSFWs as well as all customers will be offered from a comprehensive menu of skill enhancement products, a variety of options to enhance their employment prospects. Some of these products include but are not limited to; access to local, state and national job listings, job matching and referral to employers, career assessment in groups and individually, information and referral to educational opportunities and job training programs, job search workshops, individualized career coaching, computer workshops on basic pc skills, including a session of utilizing the internet for job search. In addition, One Stop Career Center staffs will use a variety of tools to attempt to match the job seekers' skills, interests and abilities with available jobs in their current labor market area, or in other areas if desired.

The Department of Career Services will continue to ensure that all local Workforce Investment Boards / One-Stop Career Centers serve all applicants; including MSFWs. One-Stop Career Center staff will be trained on how to properly implement the MSFW definition in order to correctly identify this targeted population. The goal is to get OSCCs staff familiar with all the requirements of the MSFW program. This should allow for every MSFW contact to receive a

verbal and written explanation of services available in English, Spanish or other language as appropriate. A MSFW desk aide is available and provided to all OSCC staff to assist in identifying MSFWs.

Services including core and intensive services will be provided as necessary. The MSFWs' knowledge, skills and abilities will be assessed to determine appropriate jobs to which they may be referred. Job referrals will be provided through mass recruitments, H-2A job referrals and job developments. Staff will also suggest training programs that would best serve the needs of those who possibly will not be job ready. Referrals will be made to local WIA Section 167 training programs, training programs and housing assistance agencies, etc. OSCC staff will be prepared to refer MSFWs to other community-base supportive services programs.

The DCS Quality Assurance Unit in coordination with State Monitor Advocate will conduct quality assurance visits on an annual basis to ensure that MSFWs have equal access to employment opportunities through the One-Stop Career Center system.

#### **D. Services Provided to Agricultural Employers through the One-Stop Delivery System.**

The Massachusetts One-Stop Career Center system offers a menu of comprehensive services specifically designed to assist employers in matching their jobs to qualified job seekers. The OSCCs connection to both the unemployed and employed work force, and to local community resources, provides a qualified applicant pool which has the potential to match all kind of jobs or occupations. Some of the services are listed below:

- Ability to post jobs on Job Quest, a statewide database with an option to post on a nationwide JobCentral website.
- On-site recruitment sessions allow employer representatives to meet pre-screened qualified candidates and explain opportunities that are available.
- Applicant referral service – OSCCs will send employers qualified, pre-screened candidates who meet the requirements of the job.
- Job Fairs, customized workshops on technical issues, assistance with exploring a variety of business incentive programs including tax credits and training grants, etc.

Massachusetts One-Stop Career Centers assist employers, including agricultural employers, in filling job openings. To increase agricultural employer participation, training on the specific recruitment options available for agricultural employers will be provided to OSCC, Business Service Representatives (BSRs) staff. The goal of the training is to better prepare the OSCCs to assist, guide and establish linkages with this sector of the economy. The One-Stop Career Centers will develop new employer contacts, maintain existing contacts and encourage job order creation through the local One-Stop Career Centers. State office staff will also promote labor exchange services to agriculture employers through participation at employer conferences and through the DCS website.

With significantly increased concerns over an adequate labor supply for agricultural employers, mainly due to the potential impact of new Federal regulatory requirements, the Department of Career Services (DCS) anticipates a minimum increase of labor exchange system activities by the agricultural employers. As a result, it is expected that the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) and / or the H-2A Program will be used by more employers. In anticipation to the possible increase in activity training on the ARS or H-2A programs will be provided to OSCCs

staff., In addition, DCS is in the process of completing the Prevailing Wage and Practice Surveys earlier than in years past in order to prevent any delays on the processing of these applications..

#### **E. Other Requirements.**

1. In accordance with 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.107 and as prescribed on TEG 21-11, the Monitor Advocate participated in the preparation of the agricultural plan and has been afforded the opportunity to approve and comment on the plan. Such review indicates that the plan has been prepared properly, omitting none of the prescribed requirements and properly describing the activities planned for providing services to both agricultural employers and migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs).
2. In accordance with 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.107(d)(1), (2), and (3), the Department of Career Services (DCS) has given the opportunity to the New England Farm Workers Council (NEFWC) WIA Section 167 grantee, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations to comment on the State Agricultural Services Plan. Any comments received after the submission date will be forwarded to the Regional Office, under separate cover.