

State of Rhode Island PY 2012 Agricultural Outreach Plan

The Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training will continue to comply with the requirements of 20 CFR Subpart B, Services to Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFWs) to ensure that any identified MSFWs are offered the same range of employment & training services, benefits and protections, including **Veterans Priority of Services**. These services would mirror those services that are provided to non-MSFWs and would include counseling, skills assessment, job search assistance (including resume writing & interviewing skills workshops), and suitable Job Training program referrals. Every effort will be made to achieve the Equity Indicators of Compliance as well as the Minimum Service Level Indicators. Rhode Island is not a significant state, however will continue to increase and pursue activities statewide where there is a variety of agricultural activity taking place in the attempt to identify previously unknown migrant workers in order to provide access and information regarding Job Service information and other Job Center services.

Rhode Island is not a significant MSFW state, although will continue to provide information and assistance to employers and workers regarding assistance and services available to them. Rhode Island will report any Labor Law violations such as wages, hours, working conditions, certification, maintenance and inspection of any identified migrant labor camps, recruitment and hiring of migrant workers ensuring the right to free access to intercede on behalf of individuals to its Labor Standards Division and/or Federal Wage & Hour Division. Technical assistance and other business services designed to support and grow business will be provided as well. "A significant state is one that has the highest number of Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW) applicants that utilize services under the Wagner-Peyser Act and the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) designates annually the top twenty states with the highest MSFW activity based on data received from state and local offices." <http://doleta.gov/programs/who.msfw.cfm>

Assessment of Need

Total MSFW registrations in RI from PY2010 through the present indicate 21 Migrant Farm Workers and 30 Seasonal Farm Workers. NetworkRI One Stop Career Center staff outreach to these individuals revealed incorrect self identification as Migrant Workers during the registration process in EmployRI, Rhode Island's online Labor Exchange instrument. Correct classification of the registered participants would fall under Seasonal Farm Workers, not necessarily working with crops, rather retail functions at farm stands, and also numerous landscaping activities. Data suggests that Direct Market Sales including Farmer's Markets and Farm Stands are major sales generators for RI Farms. There has been an average of (4) job orders each year in 2010 and 2011 with a decrease to (3) in 2012. These job orders were placed into Interstate and Intrastate clearance activity via the Agricultural Recruitment System. There were no interstate clearance orders received during the same time frame.

According to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Agricultural Division, Rhode Island saw a sharp increase from 2002-2007, (the highest in New England and likely the U.S.), in the number of farms and total land in farms. Farms grossing less than \$50,000.00 in

sales make up the majority of the increase; however, the number of farms grossing more than \$50,000 in sales also rose - from 168 in 2002 to 173 in 2007.

Nationally, RI ranked third in direct marketing sales on a per farm basis, and Providence County is the 50th highest county. This demonstrates a shift within categories of production and sales. For example, the green industry (i.e. nursery, horticulture and turf) accounted for 60 percent of market sales in 2007 compared to 67 percent in 2002. Fruits, vegetables and livestock have concurrently increased.

According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture - RI Highlights:

- The number of RI farms was 1,219, up 42 percent from 2002.
- Land in farms totaled 67,819, up 11 percent from 2002.
- Median farm size is 24 acres.
- 249 farms (20 percent) reported direct market sales.
- Rhode Island ranks 49th out of 50 in agricultural exports within the United States.
- The top agricultural commodities in the state are greenhouse and nursery products, sweet corn, apples and potatoes.

Services provided to Employers and MSFWs through the One-Stop System

The State Monitor Advocate (SMA) will promote and coordinate services of the RI Department of Labor & Training's Business Workforce Center, New England Farmworker's Council, state and local agricultural agencies, farm organizations, community based organizations, and other agricultural stakeholders. The Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training will work to reach out to develop a working relationship with the USDA RI Farm Service Agency, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Agricultural Division, Farm Fresh, New England Farmers Union, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group and the RI Rural Development Council. Rhode Island consists of many small, family owned farms attempting to grow their businesses. By coordinating with many of these agricultural organizations, a greater understanding of resources, hiring incentives and regulations will assist in being able to identify current workers and provide future skilled workers to meet their growing demand. Safety information and other resources will be provided to partners and organizations to hand out to their agricultural members.

In addition, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has issued for completion, a 2012 Census Survey for Agriculture to farms across the United States. The Census of Agriculture, conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. The results of this survey will assist in identifying additional means of outreach and needs to customize services to farm owners and their workers.

Additional activities are planned to provide services to agricultural employers and MSFW's through the Business Workforce Center and NetworkRI One Stop Career Centers.

In order to promote and facilitate increased services to MSFWs or Seasonal Farm Workers and increase the number involved in labor exchange activities the Business Workforce Center will do the following:

1. Give presentations regarding Business Services and Hiring and Training Incentives directly to farm business owners and other agricultural organizations either on site or through the RI Department of Labor & Training's Employer Education Series.
2. When a need is present as a result of identified MSFW's/SFWs, workshops regarding job search, labor market information to identify growing careers and industries will be scheduled and delivered on site at a convenient One Stop Career Center location or at an appropriate partner organization location.
3. Encourage employers to utilize the Agricultural Recruiting System (ARS) and EmployRI to place job opportunities and identify candidates to meet their needs.
4. Provide required employer posters and other handouts in the English and Spanish
5. Meet with agricultural organizations and affiliates on a regular basis to develop an ongoing discussion for an exchange of information, identifying issues, providing solutions and coordinating efforts for successful agricultural industry growth in Rhode Island.
6. Act as a resource and provide customized business solutions to encourage business retention and employee growth.

The Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training has partnered with the New England Farmworkers Council to provide increased services to identified MSFWs/SFWs and Farm Employers. A representative from the New England Farmworkers Council maintains a presence in the Providence NetworkRI One Stop Career Center to work with staff to identify MSFWs/SFWs and refer to New England Farmworkers Council as an additional resource to meet their needs. This representative also accompanies the Business Workforce Center representatives and the State Monitor Advocate on outreach visits to farm businesses. One Stop staff will provide all career and job services, including navigating the labor exchange system and refer businesses to the Business Workforce Center to participate in the Agricultural Recruiting System (ARS) and utilize the recruiting available in EmployRI. The labor exchange system provides job openings in both agricultural and non-agricultural employment. There have not been significant numbers of Agricultural job opportunities in the past. However, with continued outreach and collaboration with other agricultural organizations, the numbers should increase. Other services, such as training or supportive services, through the One Stop and New England Farmworkers Council WIA funding will provide a pathway for MSFWs/SFWs to transition to higher wage jobs and permanent year round employment in both the agricultural and non-agricultural industries.

All complaints from MSFWs/SFWs regarding violations of employment related standards and laws shall be taken in writing by designated representatives in each One Stop Career Center and referred to the State Monitor Advocate for timely resolution. The SMA will make referrals as appropriate and cooperate with the US Department of Labor Wage & Hour Division or other appropriate agencies involved in addressing and resolving complaints.