

# TEXAS STATE PLAN FOR AGRICULTURAL SERVICES PROGRAM YEAR 2008

## **I. Texas Workforce Solutions**

Texas Workforce Solutions—which consists of 28 Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards), their contracted service providers, and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)—provides employment and training services in all areas of the state and is designed to provide services to meet the needs of agribusiness and agricultural workers. The Boards plan and implement the local delivery of employment and training services through Texas Workforce Centers (Workforce Centers), and all state Employment Service (ES) staff, including Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) outreach specialists, is located and integrated in the Workforce Centers.

In September 2003, TWC and the Boards moved one step closer to full integration. The Boards and their contracted service providers assumed full day-to-day direction of state ES staff and began sharing the administrative oversight of this staff. While TWC maintains administrative responsibility, contracted service provider management staff shares many of the administrative functions, such as assigning individual performance measures, coordinating the hiring process, initiating disciplinary action, and evaluating staff performance. This structure:

- allows the fullest integration of employment and training services for employers and job seekers;
- eliminates duplication between programs;
- ensures the most effective and efficient use of limited resources; and
- allows Boards to be responsible for the systematic delivery of all employment and training services.

## **Texas Agriculture**

Texas is the nation's second-leading agricultural producing state, and agriculture is the second-largest industry in Texas. The employment of one out of every five Texans can be attributed to the agricultural industry. Texas has more cattle and calves than the entire human population of Florida. Texas leads the nation in the production of cotton, watermelon, cattle, sheep, goats, wool, and mohair. Texas also leads the nation in the number of farms and ranches and other types of land used for agricultural production. Each year, Texas harvests the first bale of cotton, the first fresh peaches, and the first fresh apples in the nation.

## **II. Assessment of Need**

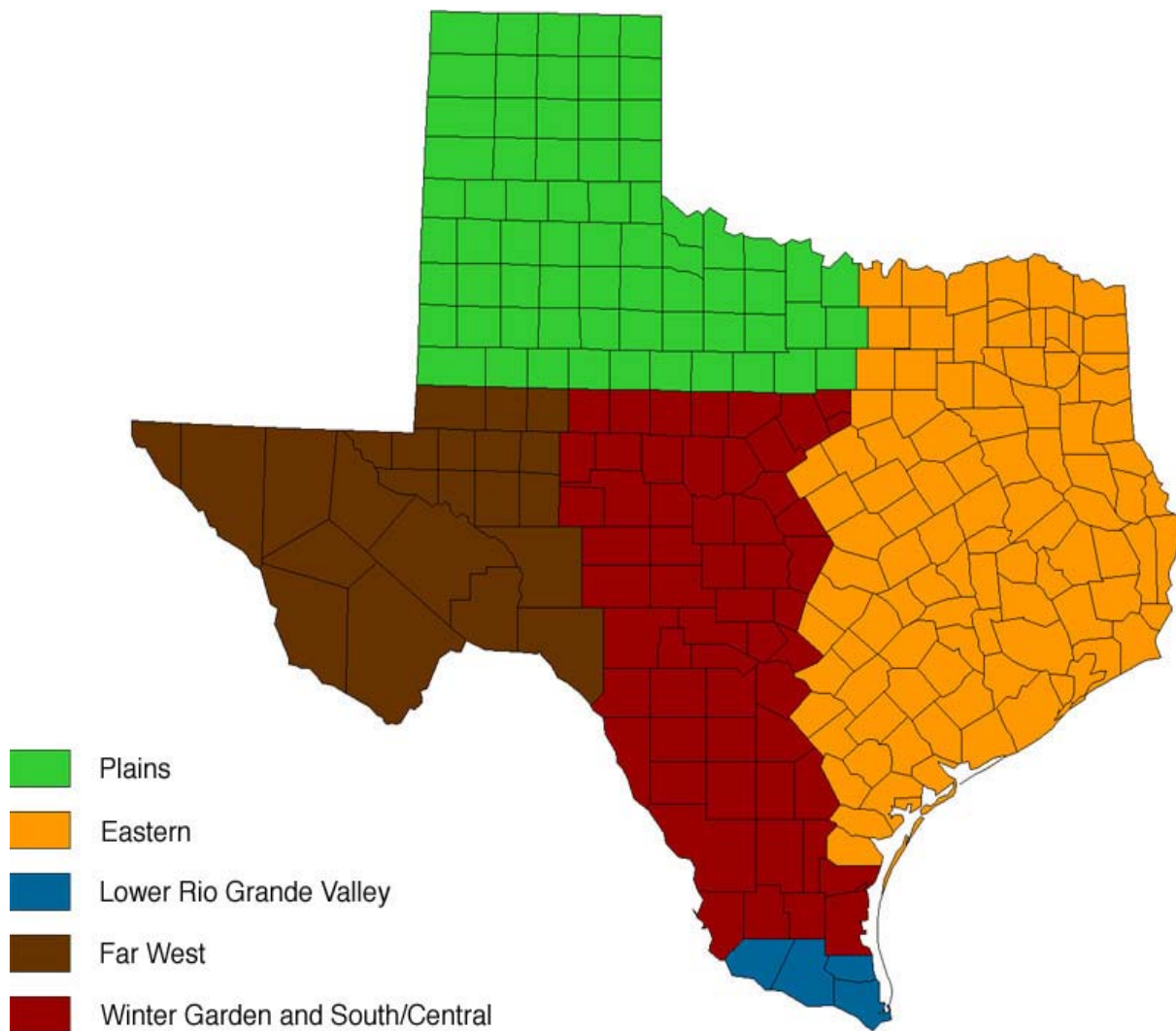
### **Texas Agricultural Regions**

Texas is one of the five leading states in the production of fresh market vegetables, and Texas ranks among the top three states in acreage planted. The leading counties for

vegetable acres harvested are Hidalgo, Starr, and Cameron. Other significant counties are Frio, Uvalde, Duval, Webb, Hale, and Zavala.

Land preparation, planting, irrigating, and harvesting are ongoing activities. Therefore, agricultural employment occurs at numerous locations and at any time during the year. Usually, employment for farmworkers begins in the Lower Rio Grande Valley region (Lower Rio Grande Valley and Cameron County Workforce Development Boards) and the Winter Garden and South/Central region (Middle Rio Grande Workforce Development Board), and moves northward to the Panhandle as the season continues. Workers who follow this crop pattern may then migrate to other states.

**Figure 1. Texas' Primary Growing Regions**  
(Texas A&M University, Texas AgriLife Extension/ArgiLife Research)



**Plains**—Includes northern Panhandle (Amarillo, north to Oklahoma) and South Plains (Lubbock, south to Big Spring), with vast dry land and center pivot irrigation production (Ogallala Aquifer). The region has clayey soil to the north and generally sandy soil to the south and east. It includes eastward rolling plains along the Red River to I-35 and south to I-20 and Abilene, with dry land production and with some pockets of irrigation. The region varies in elevation from 2,000 to 4,600 feet; in rainfall from 26 inches in the east to 16 inches in the west at the New Mexico border; and in growing seasons from 160 to 240 days. Grains, cotton, and oil seed crops are predominant, but there are major acreages of horticultural crops as well.

**Eastern**—Includes East Texas and is typified by sandy soil, small farms, and family operations with intensive crop production and numerous cow-calf/pasture operations. It is bordered by I-35 on the west and by Oklahoma and Louisiana on the north and east, and it extends southward to Beaumont and the Upper Gulf Coast and south to Houston, Corpus Christi, and the Coastal Bend region. The Eastern region has good seasonal rains, but irrigation is common. The region has humid summers, a long growing season, and close proximity to rural roadside and major metro markets. Crops for the region include melons, sweet potatoes, peas, sweet corn, peaches, blueberries, potatoes, corn, sorghum, rice, soybeans, and wheat. Other horticultural crops include nursery planting such as shrubs, bulbs, trees (including Christmas trees), annuals, perennials, and roses.

**Lower Rio Grande Valley**—Major vegetable region in the state; includes the four southern-most counties. The region has alluvial soil and irrigation water from canals or wells along the Rio Grande River. The environment is subtropical, with 340 frost-free days and a wide variety of crops for fresh and processing markets, including citrus and early season vegetables for early market windows, and agronomic crops such as cotton, grains, and sugarcane. The region experiences intensive pest pressures nearly year round.

**Far West**—Includes Trans Pecos region (Del Rio, north on US 277) and west to El Paso, with arid lands in the upper Chihuahuan Desert and desert grasslands. The region has sparse rainfall (10 inches or less) but intensive crop production where irrigation water is available from the Rio Grande and Pecos rivers. Crops include cotton, grains, and intensive vegetable and other horticultural crops on alluvial soil in a high desert environment. Production systems are similar to those in New Mexico and Arizona.

**Winter Garden and South/Central**—Includes the Winter Garden and Uvalde area. This is an intensive irrigated region west and south of San Antonio and the Hill Country, extending northward to Abilene and southward to the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The region has diversified dry land and irrigated crop production (Edwards Aquifer) inter-dispersed with vast rangeland and beef production areas. Key crops in the region include spinach, melons, cucumbers, cabbage, potatoes, onions, bunching onions, corn, cotton, sorghum, and wheat.

#### Review of Prior Year's Agricultural Activity in Texas

**Regional production.** As noted, Texas regions support a wide variety of agricultural activities. However, data is not collected by a single entity using consistent time frames and methodologies for all types of agricultural activity. For the Program Year 2008 (PY'08) Texas State Plan for

Agricultural Services (Plan), TWC has used data that is readily available. Data is limited for some of the agricultural activities (such as producing wheat, grain, and other crops and labor demand production such as cotton ginning). Furthermore, available data sources do not collect production and forecast data based on a federal program year. Therefore, calendar years are used when there is no other data available. TWC is working with the agricultural associations and other sources of data to further improve on the data available for future Plans.

Table 1 summarizes the crop production statistics for each of Texas' primary growing regions for Calendar Years 2006 and 2007. The Lower Rio Grande Valley has the most intense horticultural production, followed by the Winter Garden and South/Central region (see Figure 1). The vast acreages of grain and row crops in the high plains and rolling plains make up most of the 10.3 million acres in the Plains region. More than 150,000 acres of vegetable, fruit, and other horticultural crops are grown in the Eastern region and should not be overshadowed by the large cow/calf/forage industry in that region.

*Note: The above does not include the significant number of acres of corn, planted because of the high demand for ethanol production. The use of the land for that purpose may have contributed to less acreage in other crops in the Plains region. According to Texas A&M University AgriLife Research, corn production was not compared to other crops in that region.*

<b>Table 1 – Regional Summaries of Horticultural and Agronomic Crops (Calendar Years 2006 2007)</b>					
<b>Region</b>	<b>Crop Acreage</b>			<b>Leading Crops</b>	
	<b>Horticultural</b>	<b>Agronomic</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Horticultural</b>	<b>Agronomic</b>
Lower Rio Grande Valley	86,300	1,276,900	1,363,200	citrus, melons, onion, carrots	sorghum, cotton
Winter Garden and South/Central	101,600	770,200	871,800	spinach, melons, cukes, cabbage, potatoes, onions	sorghum, wheat
Plains	247,400	10,071,300	10,318,700	peas, beans, potatoes, melons, pumpkins, onions	cotton, corn, wheat, sorghum, peanuts
Far West	26,300	38,700	65,000	melons, onions, peppers, pecans	cotton, alfalfa hay
Eastern	154,300	2,087,500	2,241,800	melons, sweet potatoes, peas, sweet corn, peaches, blueberries, potatoes	corn, sorghum, rice, soybeans, wheat
<b>Regional Totals</b>	<b>615,900</b>	<b>14,244,600</b>	<b>14,860,500</b>		
Forage Crops	N/A	56,399,000	56,399,000	N/A	grasses, clovers, alfalfa
Seed Production	3,200	539,400	542,600	cert. sod, peas, flowers	grains, cotton, forages
Non-food Crops	55,750	95,200	150,950	sod, flowers, Christmas trees	oil crops, wildlife plots
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>674,850</b>	<b>71,278,200</b>	<b>71,953,050</b>		

Source: C. Parr Rosson III, Texas A&M University, Department of Agricultural Economics.

## Review of the Prior Year's Agricultural Worker Activity in Texas

Table 2 provides data on Texas vegetable production and average monthly labor with crop information for Calendar Years 2006 and 2007. Fruit and vegetable production is typically the most labor intensive of the crops in Texas. (Not all information for each category was available at the time of publication.)

<b>Table 2 Texas Vegetable Production and Average Monthly Labor (Calendar Years 2006–2007)</b>						
<b>Crop</b>	<b>Calendar Year 2006</b>			<b>Calendar Year 2007</b>		
	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Labor</b>	<b># of Months</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Labor</b>	<b># of Months</b>
Citrus (1,000 Boxes)	6,800	4,026	8	8,080	4,784	8
Onions	16,100	2,324	4	11,400	1,646	4
Bell Peppers	200	336	6	N/A	N/A	6
Cucumbers	1,300	1,138	3	1,100	963	3
Cantaloupes	4,300	691	2	3,600	579	2
Watermelons	22,600	844	6	22,200	829	6
Cabbage	7,600	776	9	5,400	552	9
Tomatoes	1,100	825	11	1,100	825	11
Spinach Fresh	2,200	528	4	800	192	4
Broccoli	N/A	N/A	5	N/A	N/A	5
Okra	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	3
Squash	1,300	395	1	1,400	425	1
Tree Fruits (Peaches*, Tons)	1,590	40	3	8,700	218	3
Lettuce	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	3
Carrots	2,000	81	3	1,500	61	3
Sweet Corn	1,800	54	5	2,000	60	5
Pecans (1,000 Pounds)**	47,000	141	3	70,000	210	3
Honeydews	700	78	2	650	72	2
Potatoes	19,900	293	4	18,100	266	4
Cauliflower	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	3
Sweet Potatoes	2,100	46	3	1,800	39	3
Chili Peppers	3,500	1,400	5	4,500	1,300	5

Source: C. Parr Rosson III, Texas A&M University, Department of Agricultural Economics.

\* Peaches have declined due to drought.

\*\* Pecans are an alternate-year crop. 2005 production was 65,000.

Shaded areas represent 2001 data (most recent data available).

## Projected Level of Agricultural Activity in Texas for the Coming Year

Texas' agricultural production and the associated labor needs are not expected to be significantly different in PY'08 from the most recent years. However, as noted below, hurricanes and higher-than-normal rain levels during the summer of 2008 may significantly impact crops and production in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

Additionally, as seen nationally, some of the areas that historically have had high concentrations of agricultural work have encountered industry reduction relative to other types of work, such as construction, retail, etc. With that, there also has been a shift in the labor market. While some

workers and their families who have historically performed agricultural work are now being employed in nonagricultural industries, other workers are struggling to identify transferable skills that will allow them to obtain nonagricultural jobs.

From the perspective of agricultural employers, the shift in industrial composition has created a challenge for them as well. Although Texas has been designated as an agricultural supply state, many agricultural employers face challenges in obtaining enough laborers to meet their needs. With other employment options available that may be less physically demanding with fewer immigration controls in place, there are not as many agricultural workers as there once were. The state's major citrus growers' associations have expressed concern that the labor shortage is one of their most critical issues. Employer members of these associations are interested in identifying ways to ensure that they are able to keep their current workforce through some type of guest worker program.

The 2008 hurricane season, as well as the floods in the Midwest, have had a negative effect on crops in parts of the state and on the availability of work for MSFWs.

In July 2008, the Lower Rio Grande Valley region was affected by Hurricane Dolly, a category 2 storm at the time of landfall. The potential agricultural job losses in the coming year are as follows:

- **Cotton gin workers**—lost an estimated 400 jobs (10 gins, 40 workers per gin). The gin work period (August–September) was just about to begin, and 600,000 acres of cotton were destroyed.
- **Custom harvesters**—lost an estimated 100–150 jobs. These harvesters were scheduled to work on the cotton fields that were destroyed.
- **Sugarcane harvesters**—lost an estimated 450 jobs. These individuals were scheduled to work August–January. They are unable to work until the water recedes.
- **Miscellaneous workers (irrigators and ditchers)**—lost an estimated 150–200 jobs. These workers work on individual crop farms.
- **Grain harvesters**—lost an estimated 100–300 jobs. These are combine workers who were scheduled to work through mid-August.
- **Fall and winter workers** were impacted due to the delay in the soil preparation and tilling because of the substantial rain fall from Hurricane Dolly and the continual long periods of rainfall afterwards. There are not true estimates of crop delay or damages until late December or January 2009. According to Texas Vegetable Association there was a direct impact on crop losses due to the delay. This means that this set of workers, unless they are eligible for regular unemployment insurance (UI) benefits, would become unemployed later in the disaster assistance period and potentially be eligible for Disaster Unemployment Assistance.

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency and U.S. Department of Labor.

According to Texas A&M University projections for Cameron and Hidalgo counties, losses from Hurricane Dolly include \$79 million in produce lost, with a negative economic impact of nearly \$1.5 billion. This estimate does not include all of the counties designated in the Presidential Disaster Declaration for Hurricane Dolly.

This Plan outlines some of the initiatives in place to address the particular needs of both employers and workers in the agricultural industry.

Projected Level of Agricultural Worker Activity in Texas for the Coming Year

Table 3 provides estimated data on Texas vegetable production and average monthly labor for Calendar Year 2008.

<b>Table 3 – Texas Vegetable Production and Average Monthly Labor (Calendar Year 2008, Est.)</b>			
<b>Crop</b>	<b># of Months</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Labor (calc.)</b>
Citrus (1,000 Boxes) <sup>1</sup>	8	6,464	3,827
Onions	4	10,200	1,472
Bell Peppers	6	500	841
Cucumbers	3	1,100	963
Cantaloupes	2	2,100	338
Watermelons	6	10,400	388
Cabbage	9	5,000	511
Tomatoes	11	1,000	750
Spinach Fresh	4	1,000	240
Broccoli	5	400	N/A <sup>2</sup>
Okra	3	100	90
Squash	1	800	243
Tree Fruits (Peaches, Tons)	3	3,480	87
Lettuce	3	200	N/A <sup>2</sup>
Carrots	3	1,500	61
Sweet Corn	5	1,500	45
Pecans (1,000 Pounds)	3	31,000	93
Honeydews	2	600	67
Potatoes	4	19,000	279
Cauliflower	3	150	N/A <sup>2</sup>
Sweet Potatoes	3	1,500	33
Chili Peppers	4	3,500	1,000

Source: 2008 data estimated by Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Uvalde, TX.

<sup>1</sup>2007 data used to proxy for 2008 citrus (less an estimated 20% loss due to Hurricane Dolly) and cucumbers.

<sup>2</sup>No ratios available from 2001 to calculate labor use.

In 2008, it is estimated that there will be 8,767 agricultural employers in Texas, based on the North American Industry Classification System codes reported for each employer’s UI account. Table 4 lists job postings placed under the auspices of Wagner-Peyser Act services to agricultural employers in Texas for PY’06 and PY’07.

**Table 4 – Wagner-Peyser Act Services to Agricultural Employers**

<b>Agricultural Employers</b>	<b>PY'06</b>	<b>PY'07</b>
Job Postings <sup>1</sup>	2,897	3,121
Job Postings with Placements	848	643
Percent Job Postings Filled	29.3%	20.6%
Job Openings	28,500	27,939
Job Openings Filled	4,422	2,951
Percent Job Openings Filled	15.5%	10.6%
Interstate Clearance Postings Received from Other States <sup>2</sup>	751	1,063
Intrastate Clearance Postings Initiated within the State <sup>2</sup>	303	360
<b>Nonagricultural Employers with Entry-Level Requirements<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>PY'06</b>	<b>PY'07</b>
Job Postings <sup>1</sup>	25,542	24,202
Job Postings with Placements	8,358	10,504
Percent Job Postings Filled	32.7%	43.04%
Job Openings	99,069	110,280
Job Openings Filled	28,791	35,775
Percent Job Openings Filled	29.1%	32.4%

Source: WorkInTexas.com.

<sup>1</sup>Number of job postings does not accurately reflect the number of employers because employers may file multiple postings within a year. Each posting may contain multiple job openings.

<sup>2</sup>Most of the agricultural clearance postings are due to the recruitment requirements associated with applications for foreign labor (H-2A).

<sup>3</sup>Entry-level experience and education requirements have been defined as no experience required with an education requirement of no greater than a high school diploma or equivalent.

### **Statewide Activities Related to the Agricultural Workforce**

TWC has developed a service-delivery system to enhance the referral of workers to agricultural jobs. The Texas Department of Agriculture, or its contracted service provider, provides training requirements, verification cards, and other training materials to Workforce Centers. To benefit employers, agricultural workplace safety information is shared with agricultural workers through the outreach program and the Workforce Centers.

TWC coordinates the Agricultural Recruitment System, also known as the Intra/Interstate Clearance System. To assist Workforce Center staff in meeting employers' needs, a special agricultural job bank is maintained for interstate agricultural job postings. TWC receives job postings asking for qualified workers for a specific employer. This centralized job bank provides Workforce Center staff with quick access to job postings and provides the opportunity for immediate job matching. Workforce Center staff:

- identifies workers and screens them against employers' requirements;
- transmits notices to qualified applicants;
- schedules interviews with employers; and
- performs employment eligibility verification for all workers referred to H-2A jobs.

Workforce Centers feature automated systems that directly support multitiered labor exchange activities. Employers use WorkInTexas.com, TWC's online job matching system,

to list available job openings. This process can be either self-directed or staff-assisted. Workforce Center staff assists employers by referring qualified workers.

To assist in providing their labor needs, some employers use the H-2A program for temporary agricultural workers from foreign countries. Texas makes concerted efforts to increase U.S. worker referrals to H-2A job listings. For Fiscal Year 2008, the Alien Labor Certification (ALC) program projects 387 job postings for temporary agricultural positions. The ALC program includes conducting prevailing wage surveys and housing inspections related to these job postings. ALC H-2A job postings for temporary agricultural jobs are entered into WorkInTexas.com. To ensure employers' labor needs are met, Workforce Center staff works with the job posting match results to ensure qualified job seekers are referred to the job opening. Outreach efforts are used to recruit additional qualified job seekers. Intrastate clearance efforts are used within the state to recruit workers outside the local recruiting area of a job site.

#### Coordination with the U.S. Department of Labor's National Farmworker Jobs Program Grantee

TWC entered into a statewide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Motivation Education and Training, Inc. (MET), on November 1, 2001, continuing through February 28, 2009. As the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) designated grantee, MET operates the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) in Texas. This MOU serves to assist in establishing and demonstrating effective outreach coordination and to increase registration activities between MET staff and ES staff.

Given the significant challenges that the agricultural worker presents to the state's workforce system, the ability to share responsibility for this constituency and efficiently use available resources improves our mutual capacities and likelihood of effective customer service. TWC encourages coenrolling MSFW customers in services provided by TWC, the Boards, and MET. The State Monitor Advocate reviews each Workforce Center's coenrollment activity in the annual monitoring review of each MSFW-significant Workforce Center. Some Boards are taking advantage of the opportunities available through coenrollment and partnership in serving the local workforce development area's (workforce area) MSFWs.

The primary benefits of TWC's statewide MOU with MET are as follows:

- The information exchange process is streamlined, which has improved the currency and accuracy of shared information.
- Each organization is better prepared to coordinate actions, including those that may require immediate intervention, in serving MSFWs.
- Awareness among staff from both organizations about emerging issues within the MSFW community has increased.
- A vehicle exists for the state and MET to periodically review and assess the quality of services to MSFWs.

## Communications and Linkages

TWC has created a variety of communication resources to help all Texas Workforce Solutions partners provide quality service to agricultural businesses and employers. These communication resources help agricultural businesses and employers find solutions to their employment and training needs. TWC provides these information resources in several formats, such as:

- electronic service;
- media and printed information; and
- organizational coordination.

## Electronic Service

Electronic service resources provide up-to-date information to agribusiness, rural areas, and colonias through online systems such as TWC's Web site and WorkInTexas.com. These systems ensure easy access to information and user-friendly data, and allow communication through public access automation points.

## Media and Printed Information

TWC's Agricultural Services Unit (ASU) partners with various agricultural associations to provide educational seminars for agricultural employers, where ASU distributes TWC information on various employment topics. TWC may assist in locating resources and speakers for these educational events.

ASU also produces an annual updated edition of the *Texas Directory of Farm and Ranch Associations*. This publication lists contact information for state organizations with agricultural business interests. This and other information is included on TWC's Web site at <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/svcs/agri/agsvcs.html>. Updated materials are available for download. Additionally, TWC's Web site is linked to numerous agriculture-related Web sites.

## Organizational Coordination

ASU, in collaboration with other TWC departments, is a resource for Boards in implementing strategies that increase coordination among federal and state agencies and private organizations. ASU's continued efforts encourage the use of the agricultural recruitment system to link employers needing agricultural labor in Texas with areas of the state in which there is a supply of potential MSFWs. With a cap on the number of H-2B workers allowed to obtain visas and with the complexity of the H-2A process, the use of the agricultural recruitment system provides an opportunity to meet labor needs without requiring foreign workers. ASU encourages Boards to think of new and innovative ways to serve agricultural employers and engage communities in rural development.

Upon request, ASU will facilitate training programs and provide resources to establish a link between local agricultural employers and the Texas workforce system. In partnership with the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Middle Rio Grande, Upper Rio Grande, and South Plains Workforce Development Boards and TWC's State Monitor Advocate, ASU's goal is to conduct four Agricultural Employer Forums (Forum) throughout the agriculturally significant areas of the state. These Forums are a cooperative effort between federal and state governments and the private sector to keep the public informed on pertinent issues that impact agricultural employers and workers.

The first Forum was hosted in late August 2008 by the Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development Board. Based on the response and reception, TWC will work with other workforce areas with significant agricultural industry to provide the same kind of seminar.

The proposed training Forums will cover laws that affect the agricultural sector. Providing education and outreach and sharing information on regulations results in greater compliance by employers and better working conditions for agricultural workers. These proposed Forums, depending on the identified need of agricultural associations and employers, may include the following agencies:

- Texas Department of Agriculture
- Internal Revenue Service
- U.S. Social Security Administration
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- TWC's Civil Rights Division
- U.S. Department of Justice
- U.S. Office of Special Counsel
- DOLETA's Wage and Hour Division
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- MET

TWC promotes DOL's concept of regional economies. DOL's Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) initiative is specifically designed with regional economies in mind. In regional economies, companies, workers, researchers, entrepreneurs, and governments come together to create competitive advantage, and new ideas and knowledge are transformed into advanced, high-quality products and services. In other words, this is where innovation occurs. DOL is focusing on the transformation of a regional economy and the transformation of the systems and structure that support a regional economy. These goals, like the transformation of the global economy, require new ways of doing business.

The WIRED initiative, along with other resources, serves as an asset in helping MSFWs explore other occupations within and outside the agricultural industry. This initiative allows the analysis of employer needs and the identification of training needs, further providing current and future MSFWs with the skills needed to compete in the job market.

### **III. Outreach Activities**

#### **Wagner-Peyser Act Services to MSFWs through Texas Workforce Solutions**

Texas is one of the top five states with a high estimated year-round MSFW activity level. DOL has designated Texas as a significant MSFW supply state. As a result, Texas operates an outreach program to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached by normal Workforce Center intake procedures. Outreach program staff includes the State Monitor Advocate and MSFW outreach specialists (outreach specialists) who fill 12.25 full-time equivalent positions.

The purpose of the MSFW outreach program is to take available services directly to where MSFWs live and work if they are unable to come to the Workforce Centers. The MSFW program provides the framework necessary for Workforce Center staff to locate, contact, and enhance the employability of MSFWs in Texas. Outreach specialists may provide services at the point of contact or at the Workforce Center. If needed services are not available through the Workforce Center, outreach specialists then make referrals to other agencies and organizations that provide the needed assistance. TWC and Workforce Centers' goals are to provide quality services to MSFWs and to facilitate access to all services.

Workforce Center staff and outreach specialists have begun a systematic approach to fully integrate and coordinate their efforts in order to provide a universal process for MSFW assistance in Workforce Centers. The Workforce Center site manager directs the activities and assignments of TWC's ES staff, ensuring the presence of outreach specialists at Workforce Centers. Outreach specialists can be scheduled in Workforce Centers on predetermined days for a specific amount of time. All Workforce Center staff and outreach specialists identify MSFWs who may benefit from available services and programs and make appropriate referrals to other Workforce Center staff. Workforce Center staff and outreach specialists provide MSFWs with information on the services available through the Workforce Centers, such as:

- how to acquire literacy, basic education, and the workplace skills necessary to meet workplace requirements;
- how to acquire the occupational skills necessary to meet workplace requirements for long-term employment;
- how MSFW youth can acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to make the transition into meaningful, challenging, and productive careers;
- how to understand and use the automated self-service delivery system;
- how to access labor market information on existing and emerging high-demand occupations;
- how to access local, state, and nationwide job openings;
- referrals to educational and skills training services; and
- information on and referrals to support services, including subsidized child care, transportation, and financial assistance.

In June 2001, TWC issued guidance to ensure that Workforce Centers provide equal opportunity and access to all federally funded workforce services to individuals with learning, emotional, or behavioral disabilities or with limited English proficiency (LEP). This guidance sets forth the requirement that Boards review their written policies concerning discrimination and take appropriate affirmative steps to ensure that contracted service providers and their staff are in compliance with all federal civil rights laws and regulations.

TWC is actively engaged in improving access to labor exchange systems and services through the electronic environment. Workforce Centers feature automated systems that directly support the multitiered delivery of labor exchange activities for employers and job seekers. Workforce Center reception and resource areas are critical points-of-contact for MSFWs. Workforce Center staff ensures that appropriate levels of service are provided to MSFWs, including intensive and one-on-one services. In addition, Workforce Centers have developed alternate public access points in places such as libraries and community- and faith-based organizations. Workforce Center staff trains volunteers and other entity personnel to expand the availability of facilitated self-help services. Workforce Center staff assistance is available for individuals with limited or non-English speaking abilities.

Meeting the placement-oriented minimum service level indicators for PY'08 (on DOL's Form ETA 5173) may pose challenges for TWC, as experienced in PY'07. The following conditions contribute to this challenge:

- Current MSFW minimum service level indicators place MSFW labor supply states, such as Texas, at a disadvantage. The high placement rate of 42.5 percent of registered MSFWs is unrealistic, because many MSFWs travel to take jobs in other states.
- Traditionally, MSFWs reside in areas that experience the highest rates of unemployment.
- Many states do not require UI claimants filing interstate claims to register in the local job matching system.
- Wages are depressed in areas with high unemployment, forcing migration of local workers to other parts of the state and country.
- Traditionally, much of the work performed by MSFWs has been paid on a piece-rate basis. Performance standards are based on placements at an hourly rate, making it difficult to calculate an hourly wage for this pay unit. Placements paid by piece rate are not included in performance calculations. Therefore, reported performance does not accurately reflect all activity in the wages at placement category.

Steps Workforce Centers may take to increase placements and meet the minimum service level indicators include the following:

- Develop strategies to serve MSFWs by:
  - emphasizing the provision of services that will result in more MSFWs being placed in agricultural and nonagricultural jobs;
  - providing information to MSFWs about all available Workforce Center services; and
  - emphasizing the use of electronic, self-service systems to ensure that MSFWs have an active role in their job search.
- Coordinate with Workforce Center partners to ensure an effective outreach program—including the use of the existing MOU with MET.

To better serve MSFWs, Board and Workforce Center staff have identified some challenges in working with MSFWs and are developing strategies and sharing best practices to address or minimize the following:

- **Low skills in education/literacy/computers**—Workforce Center staff, in the reception area and resource rooms, is trained to identify signs and behaviors that indicate a job seeker cannot access the available services due to education/literacy/language barriers. Workforce Center staff provides one-on-one assistance to those who need individual service. A Spanish-language videotape in the reception area and resource room explains to job seekers the types of services available through the Workforce Center and its partner agencies. Workforce Centers designated as MSFW-significant and bilingual provide Spanish-language brochures and pamphlets covering the services provided.
- **Workers lack transportation to the work sites**—Board and Workforce Center staff work with local community- and faith-based organizations and other entities to provide temporary transportation services during peak worker seasons.
- **Child care for field workers**—Workforce Center staff works with local community- and faith-based organizations and other entities to provide temporary child care services during peak worker seasons.
- **Lack of trust in government/social service agencies and changes in local service delivery systems**—Local social service entities sponsor information and services fairs where Workforce Center staff provides farmworkers with information regarding local services that are available to farmworkers and their families. These fairs also include entertainment, door prizes, and refreshments donated by participating and sponsoring entities. Other events include employer job fairs.
- **Limited knowledge of social and workforce services**—Workforce Center staff shares information with MSFWs regarding the services of various entities and provides information through outreach efforts on the full array of services available to MSFWs through the local community, rather than just the services provided by a single entity. Board and Workforce Center staff engage in developing community partnerships with educational, housing, support services, and community entities.
- **Access to computer information and long distance telephone services**—Boards provide computers in rural areas and colonias in public locations (e.g., county courthouses or libraries) and encourage community- and faith-based organizations to assist farmworkers with accessing information and services. MSFWs can call Workforce Centers at toll-free numbers to inquire about or access services.

Outreach specialist positions are allocated to Workforce Centers that DOL designates as MSFW-significant and bilingual for PY'08. These outreach centers accounted for approximately 98 percent of the MSFWs registered for work during PY'07. These sites also accounted for 80 percent of all MSFWs counseled, 94 percent of all MSFWs placed in jobs,

and 88 percent of all job development efforts made on behalf of MSFWs. Overall, MSFW-significant Workforce Centers accounted for 98 percent of all MSFWs who were provided some service. The PY'08 activity level for MSFWs in these Workforce Centers is expected to remain high.

### Numerical Goals

Outreach specialists will contact a minimum of 14,685 MSFWs during PY'08. Fourteen (11.25 FTEs) outreach specialists have been assigned to the 15 MSFW-significant and bilingual Workforce Centers for PY'08 (see Table 5). Cameron County and South Texas Workforce Development Boards operate voluntary MSFW outreach programs. However, the Workforce Centers in these two workforce areas are not designated as MSFW-significant.

Not included as MSFW-significant Workforce Centers are the Mercedes, Elsa, La Joya, McAllen, and Hidalgo Workforce Centers. These MSFW-significant Workforce Centers were included in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) State Plan for PY'07 and PY'08, but have since closed, with services now being provided by other Workforce Centers in the workforce area. Outreach is still provided by outreach specialists in the workforce areas. The total number of outreach specialists has not declined in the past year.

**Table 5 – Staffing and Minimum Performance Levels for PY'08**

<b>Cameron County Workforce Development Board</b>				
Area/Service Location	Staff	Contacts Per Year	Staff Days Worked	Contacts by other Agencies
Brownsville*	0.5	653	130.5	**
Harlingen*	1.0	1,305	261.0	**
<b>Board Total</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1,958</b>	<b>391.5</b>	<b>**</b>
<b>Middle Rio Grande Workforce Development Board</b>				
Area/Service Location	Staff	Contacts Per Year	Staff Days Worked	Contacts by other Agencies
Eagle Pass	1.0	1,305	261.0	**
Uvalde	1.0	1,305	261.0	**
Carrizo Springs	0.5	653	130.5	**
Crystal City	0.5	653	130.5	**
<b>Board Total</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3,915</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>**</b>
<b>Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development Board</b>				
Area/Service Location	Staff	Contacts Per Year	Staff Days Worked	Contacts by other Agencies
Edinburg	1.0	1,305	261.0	**
Raymondville	0.5	653	130.5	**
McAllen/Pharr	1.0	1,305	261.0	**
Weslaco	1.0	1,305	261.0	**
Rio Grande City/Roma	1.0	1,305	261.0	**
<b>Board Total</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>5,873</b>	<b>1,174.5</b>	<b>**</b>
<b>South Texas Workforce Development Board</b>				
Area/Service Location	Staff	Contacts Per Year	Staff Days Worked	Contacts by other Agencies
Laredo*	0.5	653	130.5	**
<b>Board Total</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>130.5</b>	<b>**</b>
<b>South Plains Workforce Development Board</b>				
Area/Service Location	Staff	Contacts Per Year	Staff Days Worked	Contacts by other Agencies
Floydada/Plainview	0.75	979	196.0	**
Muleshoe	0.5	653	130.5	**
<b>Board Total</b>	<b>1.25</b>	<b>1,632</b>	<b>326.5</b>	<b>**</b>
<b>Upper Rio Grande Workforce Development Board</b>				
Area/Service Location	Staff	Contacts Per Year	Staff Days Worked	Contacts by other Agencies
Fabens	0.5	653	130.5	**
<b>Board Total</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>130.5</b>	<b>**</b>
<b>STATEWIDE TOTALS</b>				
	Staff	Contacts Per Year	Staff Days Worked	
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>11.25</b>	<b>14,685</b>	<b>2,936.5</b>	

**Source:** Texas Workforce Commission.

\* Workforce Center not designated as MSFW-significant, but a voluntary MSFW outreach program is in place to serve MSFWs.

\*\* Currently, there are no contracts in place with other agencies to perform MSFW outreach activities.

### Proposed Outreach Activities

Year round outreach activities will be conducted in all MSFW-significant Workforce Centers. Workforce Center staff assigned to outreach specialist positions will be familiar with the local labor market and the needs of local MSFWs. To be most effective, outreach specialists will understand the issues unique to MSFWs and will have English- and Spanish-speaking capability.

Outreach specialists will:

- locate and contact MSFWs to provide information on the services available at Workforce Centers;
- inform MSFWs of specific job openings available and of their rights and benefits under state and federal employment-related laws;
- assist MSFWs in filing full or partial work registrations/applications, preparing worker complaints, making appointments, and arranging transportation;
- provide information about services available through electronic means and how to access this information;
- identify qualified MSFWs seeking employment, using guidelines of the federal regulations at 20 C.F.R. Part 653. The initial and follow-up outreach contacts will be made to provide needed services and to assist MSFWs in becoming employed or improving their employability;
- contact agricultural and nonagricultural employers, program operators, community- and faith-based organizations, and education and training providers on behalf of MSFWs;
- solicit jobs, training opportunities, and employment-related services for MSFWs;
- provide agricultural and nonagricultural employers with information, services, and assistance requested relating to labor issues and needs;
- accept job postings while in the field performing outreach activities;
- if there is a job(s) available for referral, refer qualified MSFWs from the MSFW Outreach Log and from previous contacts through follow-up activities; and
- when there are no job openings available for referral of MSFWs to suitable employment, select qualified MSFWs from the MSFW Outreach Log and perform job development to enhance the MSFWs' applications to include additional occupational skills, transferable occupations, and matching options for nonagricultural jobs.

Based on prior-year performance, for the purposes of obtaining job orders, conducting job developments, and providing assistance in using TWC's WorkInTexas.com, the expected number of agricultural and nonagricultural employers to be contacted through outreach during PY'08 is 736.

#### **IV. Services Provided to MSFWs through the One-Stop Service Delivery System**

##### Performance Indicators Reflecting Equity

Texas met four of the five equity ratio indicators for PY'07. Texas met four of the seven minimum service level indicators. The following Form ETA 5173 provides information on Texas' performance indicators reflecting equity:

**PART I. EQUITY RATIO INDICATORS**

Individuals	Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers		Non-MSFWs		EQUITY <sup>1</sup>
	Individuals Recd. Service	% of Apps. Recd. Service	Individuals Recd. Service	% of Apps. Recd. Service	Col. b ÷ Col. d
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
<b>TOTAL APPLICANTS*</b>	18,990		1,453,936		
1. Referred to Jobs (ES controlled)	3,774	19.8	310,850	21.38	.93
2. For whom some service is provided (ES controlled)	14,992	78.95	876,951	60.3	1.31
3. Referred to Supportive Services (ES controlled)	7,161	37.17	48,037	3.3	11.26
<b>APPLICATIONS*</b>	18,990		1,453,936		
4. Counseled (ES controlled)	6,110	32.1	100,577	6.9	4.65
5. For whom a Job Development Contact was made (ES controlled)	718	3.78	17,031	1.1	3.44

**PART IIA. MINIMUM SERVICE LEVEL INDICATORS**

ESARS DATA ITEMS	INDICATOR (Min. %)	NUMBER	PERCENT
	(a)	(b)	(c)
1. MSFWs Placed	42.5	630	3.3
2. Placed on job with wage at least 50 cents above hourly minimum	14.0	428	2.2
3. MSFWs placed on long-term non-agricultural jobs (150+ days)	3.0	262	1.3

**PART IIB. MINIMUM SERVICE LEVEL INDICATORS**

NON-ESARS ITEMS (ETA 5148D)	CRITERIA	UNIVERSE	NUMBER	PERCENT Col. c ÷ Col. b	PRODUCTIVITY (No. Per S/Y)
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
4. Significant MSFW Local Offices	100% 100%	15	Reviewed 15	100%	
5. Agricultural - CLEARANCE ORDERS	% Checked 25%	0	Checked 10	25%	
6. Complaints	% Unresolved 10%	75	Unresolved 0	0%	
7. Outreach Contacts	Productivity 5/Staff Day	14,684	Staff years 11.25		1,305

<sup>1</sup> Result of 1.0 or greater in column (e) indicates equity of service to MSFWs.

ETA 5173 (Apr. 1980)

\*Total applicants active at any time during the program year.

TWC will continue to work with Boards to improve performance for the equity ratio indicators and minimum service level indicators. During the State Monitor Advocate's monitoring visits in PY'07, performance for these measures was discussed with Board management, Workforce Center management, and MSFW outreach staff. Recommendations for improvement and enhanced service delivery to MSFWs have been provided through monitoring reports to the Boards with MSFW-significant Workforce Centers. Monitoring efforts during PY'08 will focus

on the changes made and performance resulting from actions taken in response to the recommendations.

### MSFW-Significant Workforce Center Affirmative Action Plans

DOL has identified the Edinburg, Mercedes, and Weslaco Workforce Centers (Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development Board) as representing the top 20 percent of MSFW activity nationally. The Mercedes Workforce Center is no longer in operation and staff has been relocated to the Weslaco Workforce Center. Affirmative action plans have been developed and implemented for these Workforce Centers to ensure that staff continues to reflect the local MSFW population.

The composition of TWC's ES staff at these Workforce Centers has not significantly changed over the past 15 years. Most are long-term employees who are familiar with the employment issues of MSFWs and are sensitive to their needs. Approximately 70 percent of ES staff in these significant locations have at one time worked in or been involved in agriculture and are familiar with the industry. All ES staff members in these Workforce Centers speak Spanish. These employees have traditionally worked closely with outside agencies, organizations, and service providers to coordinate services for MSFWs. They are familiar with ongoing agricultural activities and trends, employment-related issues, and the laws and regulations that protect this population.

### Staffing Characteristics and Workforce Characteristics

The Edinburg and Weslaco Workforce Centers are in Hidalgo County (see Table 6).

TWC can no longer provide a direct comparison of the race and ethnicity of Workforce Center staff and the civilian labor force due to changes in the race categories and the collection of ethnicity information used in the 2000 Census. While 90.7 percent of the civilian labor force is identified under the Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, 89 percent of the local ES staff in those Workforce Centers is identified under the previous racial category of Hispanic. Of the nine ES staff members, 67 percent are male and 33 percent are female. Workforce Center staff continues to provide all workforce services in Spanish as needed. All ES staff members identify themselves as Spanish speakers, and a significant portion of the contractor staff, who supports the work of the Workforce Centers, also speaks Spanish.

The staffing in these two sites is at or above parity with the population and civilian labor force, and TWC will continue to monitor staffing. Should the need arise, TWC will contact community-based agencies and MSFW organizations, including the state's NFJP partners, to coordinate efforts to recruit Hispanics and MSFWs for existing vacancies. TWC will maintain a pool of qualified applicants should vacancies occur.

**Table 6 – Race and Gender Statistics of the Civilian Labor Force  
From the 2000 Census SF3 File**

<b>HIDALGO COUNTY</b>							
	<u>Civilian Labor Force</u>	<u>% Total</u>	<u>Employed</u>	<u>% Total</u>	<u>Unemployed</u>	<u>% Total</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Total	200,523	100%	176,581	100%	23,942	100%	11.9%
Male	112,864	56.3%	99,558	56.4%	13,306	55.6%	11.8%
Female	87,659	43.7%	77,023	43.6%	10,636	44.4%	12.1%
White Alone	158,467	79.0%	140,796	79.7%	17,671	73.8%	11.2%
Male	89,116	44.4%	79,277	44.9%	9,839	41.1%	11.0%
Female	69,351	34.6%	61,519	34.8%	7,832	32.7%	11.3%
Black or African American Alone	856	0.4%	754	0.4%	102	0.4%	11.9%
Male	551	0.3%	482	0.3%	69	0.3%	12.5%
Female	305	0.2%	272	0.2%	33	0.1%	10.8%
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	758	0.4%	597	0.3%	161	0.7%	21.2%
Male	409	0.2%	360	0.2%	49	0.2%	12.0%
Female	349	0.2%	237	0.1%	112	0.5%	32.1%
Asian Alone	1,538	0.8%	1,427	0.8%	111	0.5%	7.2%
Male	750	0.4%	679	0.4%	71	0.3%	9.5%
Female	788	0.4%	748	0.4%	40	0.2%	5.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	55	0.0%	39	0.0%	16	0.1%	29.1%
Male	16	0.0%	0	0.0%	16	0.1%	100.0%
Female	39	0.0%	39	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	38,849	19.4%	32,968	18.7%	5,881	24.6%	15.1%
Male	22,022	11.0%	18,760	10.6%	3,262	13.6%	14.8%
Female	16,827	8.4%	14,208	8.0%	2,619	10.9%	15.6%
Hispanic or Latino <sup>1</sup>	181,812	90.7%	158,470	89.7%	23,342	97.5%	12.8%
Male	102,464	51.1%	89,483	50.7%	12,981	54.2%	12.7%
Female	79,348	39.6%	68,987	39.1%	10,361	43.3%	13.1%

Source: 2000 Census, U.S. Census Bureau. Prepared by Labor Market and Career Information (LMCI) Department, TWC.

<sup>1</sup> Hispanic or Latino refers to an ethnic category and is not a racial identifier.

Data is not comparable to the civilian labor force data produced by the LMCI Department due to differences in collection, reference period, and methodology. Census 2000 racial and ethnic categories do not match those of the 1990 Census.

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

### **Previous Year's History (Based on PY'07 Data to Date)**

This information is provided in Table 4.

Plan for Upcoming Year (Based on Estimated Data)

Table 7 provides anticipated data for serving agricultural employers in PY’08.

<b>Table 7 – Wagner-Peyser Act Services to Agricultural Employers</b>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>PY’08</b>
Job Postings <sup>1</sup>	3,069
Job Postings with Placements	761
Percent Job Postings Filled	25.44%
Job Openings	28,783
Job Openings Filled	3,760
Percent Job Openings Filled	13.31%
Interstate Clearance Orders Received from Other States <sup>2</sup>	1,129
Intrastate Clearance Orders Initiated within the State <sup>2</sup>	370

Source: WorkInTexas.com.

<sup>1</sup>Number of job postings does not accurately reflect the number of employers because employers may file multiple postings within a year. Each posting may contain multiple job openings.

<sup>2</sup>Most of the agricultural clearance postings are due to the recruitment requirements associated with applications for foreign labor (H-2A).

Ability of Texas Workforce Solutions to Meet the Needs of Agricultural Employers in PY’08

To ensure agricultural employers’ needs are met through Workforce Centers, Texas Workforce Solutions will continue to provide key activities in the agricultural referral process, such as:

- integrating services for agricultural employers and workers;
- identifying workers who are job-ready when arriving at the work site; and
- providing Texas employers with information relating to their industry, farmworkers’ rights, support service information, etc.

To better serve the needs of agricultural employers, Board and Workforce Center staff are focused on employer issues. Employer services are planned and implemented based on each Board’s service delivery plan. A Board’s plan details services the Board provides through Workforce Centers under its direction. Many Workforce Centers have Business Services Units (BSUs) responsible for local employer contacts and services. The Board plans develop additional strategies and best practices to address the following:

- **Workers lack transportation to work sites**—Board and Workforce Center staff work with local community- and faith-based organizations and other entities to provide temporary transportation services during peak worker seasons.

- **Limited knowledge of state/federal employment laws and regulations**—Workforce Center staff hosts Forums to educate employers and agricultural crew leaders regarding state/federal laws and regulations.
- **Lack of efficient use of local human resources**—Workforce Center staff encourages/facilitates communication between growers, such as cooperative groups, on farmworkers’ specific needs. One possible source of facilitation is the County Extension Agent.
- **Lack of skilled workers**—Workforce Center staff coordinates short-term training on local crops and farming.
- **Lack of facilities/staff to screen and interview potential farmworkers**—Workforce Center staff provides space in the Workforce Center to provide agricultural employers with interviewing facilities. Workforce Center staff also provides intake and referral activities at the growers’ locations.
- **Decline in farm labor contractors**—Workforce Center staff provides forms and instructions for completing crew leader registration and ensures that farm labor contractors’ registration cards are current.
- **Housing**—The Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) requires employers to provide no-cost housing to workers who cannot reasonably return to their place of residence after work each day. This is one of the unique challenges employers face when using ARS—especially in providing housing options suitable for families. TWC participates in MET’s Regional Farmworker Housing Summit; MET is the housing grant coordinator for the NFJP grantee under the WIA §167 housing grant for Texas. This regional summit illustrates the collaboration with most, if not all, housing authority municipalities and nonprofits throughout the state of Texas.

## **VI. Conclusion**

Agricultural employers and MSFWs are critical to the state’s workforce, especially in the areas of the state where agriculture is a key industry. Serving the needs of the agricultural industry requires the coordination and cooperation of:

- TWC;
- the Boards;
- the State Monitor Advocate;
- the state’s WIA §167 NFJP grantee;
- various groups representing MSFWs;
- agricultural employer organizations;
- federal agencies with regulatory responsibilities for enforcing laws relating to agricultural labor; and
- many other organizations.

Each of these parties has been instrumental in the ongoing work to support agricultural employers and their workers and has been provided with an opportunity to comment on and participate in the development of this Plan. *(A list of all organizations solicited for public comment and their comments are included as Appendix 1 to this Plan.)*

TWC, in coordination with its partners, will continue working to meet the needs of employers and workers in this key industry.

**Appendix 1**  
**Public Comment**

## Public Comment

As a routine course of doing business, Texas solicits public input regarding the services available to employers and workers through the Texas workforce system. The Plan was developed based on input received through routing meetings and communications with the agricultural workforce community.

On January 6, 2009, the proposed Plan was presented, and approved, at a public meeting of the Texas Workforce Commission, and posted on TWC's Web site for a comment period ending February 5, 2009.

The Boards' executive directors were notified of the public comment period and were asked to notify, as appropriate, chief elected officials, Board members, and other stakeholders of the Plan. TWC also provided notification of the Plan's public comment period to the following organizations:

Texas Department of Agriculture

Rick Rhodes, Assistant Commissioner for Rural Economic Development

Randy Rivera, Worker Protection

Texas Education Agency

Christina Villarreal, Director of NCLB Program

Office of Rural Community Affairs

Charlie Stone, Executive Director

Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs

Michael Gerber, Executive Director

Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas

Bill Hyman, Executive Director

Plains Cotton Growers, Inc.

Mike Hughes, President

Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council

Tommy Engelke, Executive Vice President

Texas & Oklahoma Watermelon Association

Wanda Letson, Secretary/Treasurer

Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association

Matt Brockman, Executive Vice President

Texas Christmas Tree Growers Association

Beth Walterscheidt, National Director

Texas Corn Producers Board  
David Gibson, Executive Director

Texas Cotton Ginnners Association  
Tony D. Williams, Executive Vice President

Texas Grain and Feed Association  
Ben Boerner, President

Texas Nursery and Landscape Association  
Eddy Edmonson, President & CEO

Texas Produce Association  
John McClung, President

Texas Vegetable Association  
Ray Prewett, Executive Vice President

La Union del Pueblo Entero  
Juanita Valdez-Cox

National Center for Farmworker Health, Inc.  
Bobbie Ryder, Executive Director

Sin Fronteras  
Carlos Mirentes, Executive Director

Motivation Education & Training, Inc.  
National Farmworker Jobs Program grantee  
Luis Esparza

Migrant Health Promotions  
Graciela Camarena

Texas Migrant Council  
Ramona Barron

Texas A&M Colonias Program  
Mercedes Rodriguez

Texas A&M University  
Dept. of Agricultural Economics  
Texas AgriLife Extension/AgriLife Research  
C. Parr Rosson III  
Professor & Extension Economist  
Director, Center for North American Studies

## **Comments and Responses**

**Comment:** One commenter noted that the relationship between the state's National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee, Texas' Monitor Advocate, and DOL has been recognized as a model that will be implemented in other states.

**Response:** The Commission appreciates the support and recognition of the work that is being done cooperatively between TWC's Monitor Advocate, the state's NFJP, and DOL. The benefits of the relationship are highlighted in the Plan, and the Commission and the Boards will continue to identify opportunities for increased coordination of service delivery among the organizations.