

E.AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP). EACH STATE AGENCY MUST DEVELOP AN AOP EVERY FOUR YEARS AS PART OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN REQUIRED UNDER

SECTIONS 102 OR 103 OF WIOA. THE AOP MUST INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF NEED. AN ASSESSMENT OF NEED DESCRIBES THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.

A. ASSESSMENT OF NEED. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.

(A) An assessment of the agricultural activity in the State means: 1) identifying the top five labor-intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic area of prime activity; 2) Summarize the agricultural employers' needs in the State (i.e. are they predominantly hiring local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and 3) Identifying any economic, natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State or any projected factors that will affect agriculture in the State.

Connecticut is ranked the 3rd smallest state in the United States and accounts for just 0.15% of the total area of the United States. Connecticut spans 5,543 square miles while water covers 701 square miles, giving Connecticut a total land area of 4,842 square miles.

Despite its small size, Connecticut's agricultural industry contributes over 4 billion dollars to the state's economy and Connecticut's approximately 5500 farms provide the state with roughly 22,000 jobs statewide per year.

Farms and crops are spread and vary throughout the state. Tobacco growers continue to be found along the fertile Connecticut River Valley.

Greenhouse and nursery products also continue to account for over 50% of Connecticut's agricultural production while other important crops include apples and other fruits, Christmas trees, dairy products, honey, hay, maple syrup, shellfish (including clams and oysters) and tobacco.

The following chart will specify Connecticut's top five labor-intensive crops, months of heavy activity and area of prime activity:

Crop / Commodity Groups	Period of Heavy Activity	Primary Region
Nursery, Greenhouse, Floriculture, Sod	February—August	Statewide
Vegetables	March—October	Statewide
Broadleaf Tobacco	May—October	Connecticut River Valley
Fruit, Tree Nuts, and Berries	June—October	Statewide
Christmas Trees / Short Woody Crops	April—December	Statewide

Due to factors such as scarcity in the agricultural workforce, climate, the economy and the demand for more locally sourced food, the farming industry in Connecticut has changed significantly in recent years. Farmers are not only changing what they grow but how they

grow and how they do business. Farmers are relying on greater ingenuity, diversity and technology. In recent years, the farming industry in Connecticut has seen an increase in agricultural cooperatives or Farmer's Co-ops and Community Supported Agriculture or CSAs, the growing of more non-traditional crops, the use of more non-traditional growing and harvesting methods, and an uptick in urban farming.

Connecticut farms have lost crops in recent seasons due to changing and/or more extreme weather patterns such as flooding and irregular temperatures. It is likely more farms will continue to experience these same losses in the future unless there's a positive change in our climate conditions.

As mentioned in the previous AOP, the lack of proper healthcare for our farmworkers is another factor affecting agriculture in the state. CTDOL continues to partner with our health care centers. Recently, we have witnessed a decline in health care delivery. Many of our clinics are citing 2 factors that are contributing to this decline – lack of funding and lack of qualified staff.

In assessing the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in Connecticut in the area of employment, training and housing, The Connecticut Department of Labor's observations are as follows:

- In the area of employment, the Connecticut Department of Labor's (CTDOL's) Foreign Labor Certification Unit continues to see a steady increase in the number of employers utilizing the H-2A Program, from 33 in PY 2016, to 52 in PY 2020 to 59 in PY 2022. CTDOL is also seeing an overall increase in the number of H2A job orders posted and the number of H2A workers requested in the last 3 seasons.

CTDOL continues to record not a single employer utilizing the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) exclusively. Again, all agricultural job orders submitted to CTDOL were in relation to H-2A visa workers.

The data reflects the difficulty Connecticut farms are having in hiring local workers and the resulting increase in demand for foreign workers. No single factor has led to the labor shortages farms are experiencing today. But in communities across rural America, a generational shift is contributing. In CTDOL's previous and current outreach experience, many employers have lost part of their local workforce to better opportunities, so an increase in the number of employers utilizing the H-2A Program and the number of workers requested through the H-2A Program is expected to continue.

- In the area of training, both CTDOL and the NFJP in Connecticut (New England Farmworker's Council) have had similar observations. Farmworkers interested in training tend to be in their 20's, 30's and young 40's – both men and women. These groups tend to seek short term skilled training in areas such as CDL Driving, Plumbing, Electrical, Welding, Certified Nursing Assisting, Phlebotomy and Medical Assisting.

Many farmworkers, also both men and women, in their late 40's, 50's, 60's and beyond tend to turn down any offers of training. It is CTDOL's observation that many of these workers have less than a high school education, lack basic reading and math skills, are Limited English Proficient or LEP and are fearful of failure or change. They seem to be comfortable in the work they do and know. However, many farmworkers are interested in training for their children. Many wish to see their children flourish in other careers outside of farming.

▪ In the area of housing, Connecticut farmworkers would benefit greatly from updates and improvements to current MSFW housing regulations, which date back now to nearly half a century. The SMA's extensive visits and conversations with farmworkers throughout the state has brought to light some of the issues farmworkers experience in congregate housing, such as insufficient stove tops for cooking, insufficient hot water and number of shower heads, lack of clothes washers, lack of air conditioning, uncomfortable bunk beds with insufficient room to even sit up on the bed. These are dwellings that pass, and at a minimum, meet current housing regulations. The housing regulations were developed 50 years ago during a time when there were groups of students traveling throughout the country in the summer working the fields. The majority of today's Connecticut migrant farmworkers are male adults, some 6 feet or taller.

The once common practice of employing a camp cook for a group of workers has also all but disappeared in Connecticut, with only one farm currently employing a camp cook for half of their season. Most migrant farmworkers prefer to shop and cook for themselves, which can also be more beneficial to their well-being as they can tailor their diets to possible health conditions.

When approached for assistance in planning congregate housing by employers interested in the H-2A program, the SMA and Foreign Labor staff have shared the workers experience when housed in dwellings that meet the bare minimum regulations. CTDOL has advised employers to go above and beyond in certain areas, such as those discussed above. The employers that have been receptive to the message of providing living conditions that would be suitable to oneself, and that have taken into account the shortcomings of the current housing regulations, have been nothing short of ecstatic with their workforce and production. Employers that continue to utilize housing with the most bare minimum provisions are ones that continue to experience conflict and complaints amongst the workers.

(B) An assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers means summarizing

Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain countries, what language(s) they speak, the approximate number of MSFWs in the State during peak season and during low season, and whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farmworkers). This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations, and State and/or Federal agency data sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration.

As mentioned in prior Agricultural Outreach Plans, Agricultural workers contacted through CTDOL's outreach efforts continue to experience vulnerabilities and barriers due to language, literacy, education, immigration status, and healthcare education. Those without legal status are even more susceptible to exploitation and retaliation. It is important to remember how large a percentage of the farmworker population does not have work authorization, and that this population has not and will not, generally speaking, seek employment and training services through CTDOL's outreach efforts or at one of Connecticut's AJCs. According to Agricultural Census data from 2017, the share of crop workers not legally authorized to work in the country has grown from about 15% in 1989-91 to about 48% in 2014-16. The same survey previously indicated that about three quarters of all hired crop farmworkers are considered settled. Of the remaining 25%, about half are "shuttlers", meaning they work at a single location more than 75 miles from home, and may cross an international border to get there. The once more common migrant farmworker that moved from state to state working on different crops as the seasons advance, is now a relative rarity. This shift in migration patterns and demographics is significant. Given that immigration policies have not changed since the last AOP, farmworkers in Connecticut that lack employment authorization will continue to be hard to reach through CTDOL's outreach efforts, as both employers and farmworkers are reluctant to interact with any state or government employees, let alone seek employment and training services. A resolution or program for these workers to attain legal status (work authorization, residency) would increase the number of participants for employment and training services, put employers more at ease when approached by SWA staff, and most importantly, lessen the exploitation and retaliation against workers.

CTDOL estimates it had 6800 total agricultural workers during the period of highest activity in PY 2022, July through September 2021. Migratory workers from the H-2A program accounted for 1420 of those positions and originated from Mexico, Jamaica, Haiti, Guatemala, and South Africa. Although Spanish is the predominant language for workers from Mexico and Guatemala, each country should be considered as a different culture, or number of cultures in some. Jamaican Patois/Creole is the predominant language for workers from Jamaica and Haitian Creole for those from Haiti. Workers from South Africa have been predominately English speakers.

CTDOL plans on continuing its collaborations and relationships with agencies and healthcare providers such as Community Health Services, Community Health Centers Inc., and Generations Family Health Centers, which were heavily strengthened during

the recent pandemic. These three agencies/health centers (some operate more than one center) have farmworker programs, but they are experiencing an overall decrease in funding. Some of the medical conditions that agricultural workers are being diagnosed or treated for are putting a heavier strain on the system as well, which reduces funding for the other patients. Even though all agricultural workers would benefit from an increase in health education, foreign agricultural workers would benefit from an increase in health education in their countries of origin. Health education is being provided by clinical workers here stateside, but patients would benefit from greater support when they're home. There have been some cases where amputation could've been avoided or prevented, for example.

Finally, CTDOL also identifies the need for greater support regarding financial education, especially taxes and filing. CTDOL staff is often approached with questions or issues regarding taxes, filing, and refunds/payments during their visits with MSFWs. These are issues not often discussed when the focus is more on worker protections and employment and training.

(2) Outreach Activities. The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

(A) Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.

All outreach efforts to MSFWs are performed by the Outreach Worker. CTDOL's Outreach Worker carries out their responsibilities, throughout the state, in a full-time capacity. The Outreach Worker is a CTDOL merit employee.

Connecticut's highest period of MSFW activity falls between the months of March and November. During this time, the Outreach Worker visits MSFWs at their working, living, or gathering areas. The Outreach Worker provides MSFWs information on the services available at the local one-stop centers including 1.) the availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities, and other related services; 2.) information on the Employment Service and Employment-related Law Complaint System; 3.) information on other organizations serving MSFWs in the area; and 4.) a summary of farmworker rights, including farmworker rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment. The Outreach Worker will instruct MSFWs to visit local one-stop centers to take advantage of the services available to them. If the MSFWs are unable to go to the American Job Center, the Outreach Worker is fully trained, prepared, and equipped to bring the services to them.

CTDOL's outreach efforts are not limited to business hours only. Workers can be visited after hours or during weekends, often in coordination with other agencies or service providers, such as the Connecticut River Valley Farmworker Health Program (CRVFHP) or the New England Farm Workers Council. (NEFWC). With the help of the SMA, the Outreach Worker has been introduced to many of these other agencies and service providers. The Outreach Worker has both established and maintained a relationship with these entities and works in conjunction with them to assist our MSFWs.

The SMA and Outreach Worker will conduct frequent field visits to the working, living, and gathering areas of MSFWs. The Outreach Worker will discuss the SWA's provision of Employment and Training Services and other employment-related programs with MSFWs,

crew leaders, and employers. The SMA will engage employers and crew leaders regarding program performance and other issues.

(B) Providing technical assistance to outreach workers. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as one-stop center services (i.e. availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities), the employment service complaint system, information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

Connecticut hired a new Outreach Worker in June of 2023 in compliance with the requirements set forth in 20 CFR 653.107. The Outreach Worker will carry out their responsibilities, throughout the state, in a full-time capacity during peak season as Connecticut is deemed a non-significant state. Both the SMA and the Outreach Worker are CTDOL merit employees.

CTDOL's Outreach Worker has access to professional development activities through training sessions and conferences conducted by the National Monitor Advocate (NMA) and its office, regional ETA offices or the Regional Monitor Advocate (RMA). Additional professional development classes and trainings are available to CTDOL merit staff. The Outreach Worker can attend all relevant complimentary trainings offered by the Connecticut River Valley Farmworker Health Program, New England Farm Workers Council, Wage and Hour, Wage and Workplace Standards, OFLC, IRS, DRS, and other organizations who are also committed to helping our farmworkers and our agricultural employers.

CTDOL's Outreach Worker has been trained in one-stop center procedures and in the services, benefits, and protections afforded MSFWs by the ES, including training on protecting farmworkers against sexual harassment, sexual coercion, assault, and human trafficking.

CTDOL's Outreach Worker will also be trained in CTDOL's Complaint System procedures and all local, state, regional, and national enforcement agencies that would be appropriate to receive referrals. The program for such training will be formulated by the State Equal Opportunity Officer, pursuant to uniform guidelines developed by ETA. The SMA will be given an opportunity to review and comment on the State's program.

The Outreach Worker has been given extensive training and technical assistance in the availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities, the employment service complaint system, information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment since his date of hire.

The Outreach Worker has been given training and technical assistance in the availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities, the employment service complaint system, information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

Connecticut's SMA and Outreach Worker attend all available conferences and/or trainings.

The resource materials, technical assistance, and best practices attained at these events are shared with American Job Center staff and periodic MSFW and Employment Service Complaint System training is provided to AJC staff to refresh their MSFW and Employment Service Complaint System knowledge.

(C) Increasing outreach worker training and awareness across core programs including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues.

The Outreach Worker also has knowledge of the Unemployment Compensation Program and has full access to the state's unemployment system, ReEmployCT. The Outreach Worker can be the first point-of-contact with a farmworker if they have a problem with their unemployment benefits. The Outreach Worker will identify the problem and make a referral to an appropriate unemployment representative who can fix the problem. The Outreach Worker also will assist some farmworkers with the data entry of their initial claim if necessary. There are provisions and protocols in place for assisting farmworkers at the local one-stop centers with their unemployment issues as well. In addition, the Outreach Worker is familiar with job seeker services and is in contact with both Wagner-Peyser and WIOA staff in each American Job Center office across the state. The Outreach Worker is also stationed, on a weekly basis, to work in one of the busiest American Job Center locations in the state. This one-stop center generally assists many of our farmworkers in CT. The Outreach Worker has been trained in CTDOL's comprehensive workforce development case management system or **CTHires** (Connecticut Helping Individuals and Employers Reach Employment Success) and utilizes this website to register the farmworkers as Wagner Peyser participants in order for them to be eligible to receive services. CTHires is utilized by our jobseekers to search for work and training and to create a resume. Our employers utilize CTHires to both seek and hire their workforce. CTDOL will continue to offer UI and core program training on a periodic basis to the Outreach Worker, including training on identification of UI eligibility issues. The Outreach Worker has access to core program managers and receives ETA notifications regarding program updates and/or changes.

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(D) Providing State merit staff outreach workers professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.

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(E) Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.

The SMA and Outreach Worker will continue to coordinate outreach visits to farms with CTDOL's NFJP grantee, New England Farm Workers' Council (NEFWC), Connecticut River Valley Farmworker Health Program (CRVFHP) and area Community Health Centers, and the US DOL Wage and Hour Division.

Coordination with CRVFHP and their associated Community Health Centers has been crucial in keeping Connecticut's farmworkers healthy.

Coordination with NEFWC will continue per the Memorandum of Understanding. The Outreach Worker and SMA will also look to maintain and expand on other established relationships.

Both the Outreach Worker and SMA are active in coordinating events and participating in joint meetings with various entities such as the Mexican Consulate in Boston, MA.

(3) Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

(A) Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes:

i, How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers;

ii, How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.

Agricultural workers, job seekers, and employers have access to the same employment services available in each of Connecticut's American Job Centers (AJCs) that are available to non-agricultural workers, job seekers, and employers.

The network consists of 5 comprehensive centers and additional partner affiliate offices with partial SWA staffing. CTDOL's Outreach Worker encourages workers and job seekers to visit the AJCs to take advantage of the following services:

- Computer labs with internet access, including access to CTDOL's self-service operating system/database for job seekers, employers, and partner agencies - CTHires;
- Reemployment workshops and services;
- Career planning and counseling;
- Access to labor market information;
- Recruitment assistance;
- Veteran employment and training services;
- Adult, Dislocated, and Youth Worker activities under WIOA;
- Adult Education under the Connecticut State Department of Education;
- Apprenticeship Training information;
- Vocational Rehabilitation Training under DORS (Department of Rehabilitation Services) and BESB (Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind);
- Unemployment Insurance assistance;
- Jobs First Employment Services;
- Referrals to supportive services;
- Complaint handling.

The Outreach Worker is also present weekly in the Hartford AJC – our busiest MSFW frequented office. The Outreach Worker is available to introduce farmworkers to the programs and services offered in the AJC including WIOA funded training. The Outreach Worker and AJC staff are trained to register MSFWs in CTHires and provide them with the full range of services available to all other CTDOL clients.

American Job Center staff is provided periodic MSFW Program and Job Service Complaint System training to refresh their MSFW and Job Service Complaint System knowledge.

The SMA will continue on-site monitoring of the AJCs to ensure compliance with the Job Service regulations and offer technical assistance as needed.

Agricultural employers can access employment services by contacting a Business Engagement Representative or by contacting the Outreach Worker, the Foreign Labor Representative or State Monitor Advocate. The Connecticut Department of Labor contracts

with Geographic Solutions for case management of the Wagner-Peyser and WIOA programs and its Labor Exchange system - CThires. Employers in good standing can post their jobs and search for individuals with the skills and experience for their job openings. Employers can also create a Virtual Recruiter for their open positions. The Virtual Recruiter will alert the employer when a resume that matches their requirements is entered into CThires. Individuals can create and post their resumes and also set up a Virtual Recruiter. When a job matching their qualifications is posted in the system, they are alerted. CT's Business Engagement Unit assists employers in registering in the CThires system, posting jobs, and searching for qualified candidates. There is also a step-by-step guide for employers to follow when using CThires. The Business Engagement Unit is working to expand services to employers by advertising hard to fill vacancies and conducting job fairs in the American Job Centers for these positions.

Agricultural employers have had the opportunity to express their concerns and provide feedback to CTDOL during an annual meeting coordinated by the State Monitor Advocate. Due to the COVID Pandemic, this convening has been conducted virtually in recent years. The plan is to return to an in-person gathering in PY2024.

(B) Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.

The Employment Service Complaint System information is provided during outreach visits and presentations to farmworkers and advocacy groups.

The SWA recently distributed an updated ES Complaint System Poster in both English and Spanish to the five AJC Offices and the five Workforce Investment Board Offices and their affiliates in January 2024 for mandatory posting in each location.

An updated ES Complaint System poster will also be posted in the NFJP office and NFJP staff will be given an overview of the complaint process and will be instructed to contact the Outreach Worker with all MFW complaints and with any Apparent Violation information.

(C) Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

The ARS continues and will continue to be presented to employers, but the response and concerns remain the same - a shortage of US workers and a lack of dependability from U.S. workers.

Many agricultural employers in Connecticut continue to rely on the H2A Program for their labor needs.

In the next four years, SWA staff will:

- Collaborate with CTDOL's Business Engagement Representatives to better serve the needs of agricultural employers.
- More outreach visits will be conducted by the Outreach Worker as already indicated by our recently reported data.

- All H2A jobs will be posted in the local labor area of need. These postings will instruct interested job seekers to visit their nearest American Job Center for registration in CTHires, orientation to services and referral.
- AJC staff have been, and will continue to be, trained in identifying and providing services to MSFWs.
- All AJC Directors have been trained and have the ability to run reports on services provided to all participants and can filter this data based on MSFW status. Job Center Directors and CTDOL's Business Engagement Unit will continue to receive updated information and training on how best to serve both the MSFW and the agricultural employer.

Services available to all employers in Connecticut including agricultural employers consist of:

- Assistance with the placement of job orders in our Labor Exchange System (CTHires);
- Assistance with the recruitment of qualified workers;
- Mediation and interpretation assistance;
- Complaint assistance;
- Technical assistance on compliance with employment related Federal and State regulations.

(4) Other Requirements.

(A) **Collaboration.** Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

Connecticut's One-Stop Career Centers, in collaboration with strategic partners and affiliated sites, will coordinate service delivery including marketing services available in the local office and providing location information for the nearest One-Stop Career Center or affiliated partner offices. The SWA will ensure that local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) partner with New England Farmworkers Council (NEFWC), the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee. CTDOL and NEFWC have an ongoing Memorandum of Understanding regarding collaboration and exchange of referrals. The agreement builds upon the established partnership by outlining the joint outreach processes, including providing required information on partner programs, and/or services, reporting activities, and conducting need gap analyses where outreach or service delivery is inadequate. Strategies will be developed to ensure service delivery collaboration exists for local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs).

The following activities, in which the SMA was involved in PY 2022, that promoted interagency cooperation included:

- Continued cooperation with NEFWC in an effort to provide MSFWs with employment

and training services in a more fluid manner while avoiding duplication of services. Some outreach visits to MSFWs at farms were coordinated with NEFWC. NEFWC is also introduced to AJC staff during MSFW Identification Training sessions, allowing them to give AJC staff an overview of the services they offer to not only MSFWs, but their family members as well. Historically speaking, CTDOL has had a statewide MOU with NEFWC, its NJFP grantee, that is reviewed and renewed on a biennial basis. The current agreement signed in place is between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2024.

- Coordinated with Jarmoc Farms to host University of Connecticut History 1570 honor class students on a field trip on October 12, 2022. The SMA and Foreign Labor Representative coordinated a live presentation with the then director of the Connecticut River Valley Farmworker Health Program at the same University of Connecticut class the week prior to the field trip, on October 5, 2022. Students learned about the Monitor Advocate system and its history, as well as the history behind community health centers. Students from this class have been known to end up taking on social issues as either part of their careers or volunteer work.
- Assisted CRVFHP and area community health centers to coordinate the provision of COVID-19 educational materials, alerting employers of assistance with planning, personal protective equipment, and vaccine availability. The SMA was also a member of the CRVFHP Advisory Council, meeting with other council members at least quarterly.
- Re-established a connection with New Connecticut Farmer Alliance allowing CTDOL to assist some 350 farmworkers to apply for funds under the USDA's Farm and Food Workers Relief Program.

During the next four years, SWA staff will:

- **Maintain and expand on established relationships and work on creating new ones.** In 2023, Connecticut hired a new Outreach Worker in compliance with the requirements set forth in 20 CFR 653.107. Since then, the Outreach Worker has established several new partnerships and continues to do so while maintaining existing partnerships. The following new partnerships were established in the short time since the Outreach Worker's hiring:
 - Established a relationship with the new Jamaican Liaison Officer – Kandre Leveridge.
 - Visited the Immigration and IRS offices in Hartford to gather information and resources for our farmworkers.
 - Met with the staff at Vita Free Tax Preparation Center and HRA North Community Center to seek tax return assistance for farmworkers.
 - Visited the San Juan Center, Mi Casa Family Services and the House of Bread – all in Hartford, CT – seeking services for our farmworkers.
 - Discussion with John Simonetti from CT Paid Family Leave.
 - The Outreach Worker, FLC Representative and Supervisor have all signed up for the weekly newsletter from Connecticut's Department of Agriculture.

The Outreach Worker also continues to maintain existing partnerships with our Health Care Centers, New England Farm Worker's Council (NFJP), our H2A Agents, Wage & Hour, CTDOL's Wage and Workplace Standards, Unemployment Compensation, the Department of Social Services, CRVFHP and New Connecticut Farmer Alliance.

The SMA hosted Representatives from the Mexican Consulate located in Boston during 2023 and 2024 and accompanied them on several field visits. The SMA is also working to establish new partnerships.

All SWA staff will continue to forge new relationships with partner agencies for the benefit of the MSFW.

CTDOL recognizes the need to collaborate with other MSFW organizations in order to expand capacity and leverage existing resources. CTDOL will establish informal agreements with MSFW serving organizations whom are already working in partnership with CTDOL, including:

- State of Connecticut Department of Agriculture – The SWA will try to expand services to new farms and farmworkers and will work with the Department of Agriculture.
 - San Juan Center – The SWA will develop this relationship to assist in referrals to this organization that provides computer literacy training, educational and employment programs and referral services to health, housing, human services and crisis counseling needs.
 - Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut – Coordination of outreach visits to farms to provide information regarding workers' rights and other legal issues.
 - ConnectiCOSH – The SWA is currently developing a relationship to bring "Safety Training" to our agricultural employers and farmworkers
- **Be active in coordinating events and participating in joint meetings with various entities.** In 2023, SWA Staff coordinated a "Gently Used Clothing Drive" for our MSFWs. Not only did they collect clothes and toiletries for our farmworkers, they also donated several items to local shelters, the NFJP, the Goodwill and the Salvation Army. SWA staff will continue to coordinate such activities during the next four years.

As previously mentioned, CTDOL is committed to hosting our annual Grower Meeting going forward. This meeting will host and educate agricultural employers and is a joint effort with presentations given by many of our partner agencies.

Agricultural services staff will participate in federal and local meetings (as well as other important events) conducted by farm-related agencies and organizations (as well as other important events) to promote the use of CTDOL services.

- **Educate and inform employers regarding new laws and changing regulations.** The SWA staff have been utilizing e-mail blasts to educate agricultural employers on several new laws and changing regulations. SWA staff will continue to use e-mail blasts as a method of information dissemination.

As mentioned above, CTDOL is committed to hosting an annual "Growers Meeting," also for the purpose of information dissemination and training.

CTDOL's Business Engagement Unit has recently updated a guide for employers called "CTDOL Employer Resource Guide." This guide will provide employers with an abundance of information on the programs and resources available at the Connecticut Department of Labor.

Agricultural employers have been advised to contact SWA staff when they have questions or concerns.

(B) Review and Public Comment. In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.

i. The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

CTDOL acknowledges that its Agricultural Outreach Plan includes a statement that Connecticut State Department of Aging and Disability, Connecticut State Department of Education, Connecticut State Department of Social Services, Connecticut State Department of Economic and Community Development, Connecticut's Workforce Investment Boards (The Workplace Inc., Capital Workforce Partners, Workforce Alliance, Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board, Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board), New England Farm Workers Council (WIOA Section 167 NFJP Grantee), and Connecticut River Valley Farmworker Health Program have all been afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the Agricultural Outreach Plan. None of the agencies chose to submit comments to be published nor recommendations for the AOP. New England Farm Workers Council was impressed with CTDOL's AOP and appreciative of the opportunity but stated they currently did not have comments.

(C) Data Assessment. Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

Initial analysis of Connecticut's Wagner-Peyser MSFW Equity Ratio Indicators over the past four completed program years (PY 2019 through PY 2022) shows a considerable decrease in the number of overall registered participants, MSFW and non-MSFW. While the decrease in PY2020 could be attributed to the pandemic, the slow recovery of registered MSFW participants has been more closely tied to recent staffing turnover/retirements in the Outreach Worker and Foreign Labor Representative positions. As CTDOL has recently onboarded new staff in those positions, it will continue to strive to increase the number of registered MSFW participants in its workforce exchange system, CTHires. Further analysis of the data is encouraging, as it shows CTDOL increasing the number of Equity Ratios met from 3 out of 8 in PY 2019 to 6 out of 8 in PY 2020. Two factors need to be taken into account with smaller states such as Connecticut: First, the seasonal nature of the jobs due to geographic location and weather, resulting in periods of inactivity for many MSFWs. The second factor is the desire of many of Connecticut's MSFWs to return to their jobs every

season. A third factor worth mentioning is that one of the Equity Ratio Indicators, Individualized Career Services (ICS) is affected by the prior two factors. RESEA is one of the programs that triggers ICS, and due to the seasonal nature of the agriculture in the state, MSFWs are typically not selected for RESEA.

CTDOL has stabilized the Outreach Worker and Foreign Labor Representative positions so that it can now work towards increasing the number of MSFW Wagner-Peyser participants. Seasonal agricultural employment has increased over the past four program years. CTDOL continues to provide its employment services in an equitable manner and strives to meet the Equity Ratio Indicators. The stability in these positions should also allow CTDOL's SMA to be able to provide more training/technical support and monitoring statewide.

In the next four years, CTDOL plans to:

- Conduct more Outreach Visits to market AJC Services;
- Post all H2A jobs in the local labor area of need. These postings will instruct interested job seekers to visit their nearest American Job Center for registration in CTHires, orientation to services and referral to jobs and training opportunities;
- Continue to train AJC staff and AJC Directors and Supervisors in serving MSFWs and in documenting the services provided;
- Fully support the SMA in conducting their responsibilities under 20 CFR 653.108;
- Collaborate with CTDOL's Business Engagement Representatives to better serve the needs of agricultural employers.

(D) ***Assessment of Progress.*** The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

State Monitor Advocate Annual Summary of Services to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs) Outline of Contents

20 CFR 653.108(s)

The State Monitor Advocate (SMA) must prepare for the State Administrator, the Regional Monitor Advocate, and the National Monitor Advocate, an Annual Summary describing how the State provided employment services to MSFWs within the State based on statistical data, reviews, and other activities as required in this chapter. The summary must include:

- (1) A description of the activities undertaken during the program year by the SMA pertaining to his/her responsibilities set forth in this section and other applicable regulations in this chapter.

Review of the Previous Year's Agricultural Activity in the State.

USDA/NASS data for 2022 reported 5,500 farm operations in Connecticut operating on about 380,000 acres of land. According to Labor Market Information and H-2A related job orders processed, CTDOL also estimates that about 6,800 farmworkers were employed during the calendar quarter with the most activity, July through September. PY 2021 saw a slight increase in the number of employers and job orders submitted in relation to H-2A, from 56 to 61 and 108 to 122 respectively, while the overall number of workers requested saw a slight increase from 1403 to 1420. The sector continues to trend with the increase of employers submitting job orders in relation to H-2A workers, and it correlates to the conversations the Foreign Labor Representative and SMA are having with the states employers, whereby they're even losing workers without proper legal status to higher paying jobs in other industries.

CTDOL's Foreign Labor Representative, along with the State Monitor Advocate (SMA), have continued to assist in screening job seekers inquiring about the posted job orders, ensuring that qualified prospects, understood the terms and conditions of each job before being referred to a job opening.

Outreach

For PY 2022 CTDOL has had to deal with staffing challenges with its Outreach Worker position, due to union protections preventing the vacated position to be filled. The SMA continued to remind management and administration that the SWA was out of compliance and needed to fill the position as soon as possible. A permanent Outreach Worker was hired on 6/30/23. The Foreign Labor Representative and SMA have provided outreach to both workers and employers in the meantime, resulting in 1,262 contacts for the program year.

The SMA has continued to work very closely with the Connecticut River Valley Farmworker Health Program (CRVFHP), Community Health Services, Community Health Centers Inc, and Generations Family Health Centers despite the lessening effects of COVID-19, to keep workers connected to healthcare and health education. The SMA has also tried to establish collaboration with other stakeholders whenever possible, such as with New Connecticut Farmer Alliance. New Connecticut Farmer Alliance has been able to learn and expand their knowledge of farmworker needs, characteristics, and struggles through the SMA, but they are also responsible for distribution of some of the funds under the USDA's Farm and Food Worker Relief Program.

CTDOL staff continue to promote the integrated, and universally accessible, employment services that are offered to all customers, including MSFWs, in each of Connecticut's American Job Centers (AJC). MSFWs have access to the following services through a single delivery system: Wagner-Peyser labor exchange services such as Career Counseling, Veterans Employment and Training, Professional Resumé Critiquing/Resumé Writing, Job Search Assistance, Reemployment Workshops and Job

Referrals. Other employment and training services include Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth under WIOA; Adult Education, Apprenticeship Training, Vocational Rehabilitation Training under Department of Aging and Disability Services; and BESB (Board of Education and Services for the Blind), Unemployment Insurance, Jobs First Employment Services, and Referral to Supportive Services. This universal access to core services guarantees barrier-free admission to all seekers of employment and training services, including individuals with disabilities. If an MSFW cannot, or does not wish, to visit an AJC to seek these services, assistance to access to these services is provided by the outreach worker.

Staff encouraged non-English-speaking customers to take advantage of the free English as a Second Language (ESL) classes offered through Adult Education. This is a critical component of promoting lifelong learning and developing the basic skills needed to secure employment and pursue career growth.

Affirmative Action Plans

Regulations require SMA participation in Affirmative Action Planning only as it relates to MSFWs. Connecticut has no significant offices and therefore is not required to submit an MSFW Affirmative Action Plan. CTDOL's Affirmative Action Plan relates only to its own employees and their hiring.

- (2) An assurance that the SMA has direct, personal access, whenever he/she finds it necessary, to the State Administrator and that the SMA has status and compensation approved by the civil service classification system, and is comparable to other State positions assigned similar levels of tasks, complexity, and responsibility.

The State Monitor Advocate (SMA) position is a federally mandated position, required under 20 CFR §653.108. This individual monitors the agency for compliance with federal regulations concerning services and protections to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs). The individual also advocates on behalf of the MSFW population to improve services within CT DOL, and other government and non-government agencies. The SMA is also responsible for investigating and processing MSFW complaints and the overall monitoring of the JS Complaint system within CT DOL. When necessary, he acts as a mediator between employers and farmworkers; offers technical advice to agency officials, employers and other interested parties; and serves as an MSFW representative on boards and committees of community organizations. Yu-mon Luis Chang has been designated as the Connecticut SMA by the State Administrator. In this role, Luis has access as needed to the administrator within the CT Department of Labor.

- (3) An assurance the SMA devotes all of his/her time to Monitor Advocate functions. Or, if the SWA proposed the SMA conducts his/her functions on a part-time basis, an explanation of how the SMA functions are effectively performed with part-time staffing.

In Connecticut, the State Monitor Advocate is a full-time position to ensure SMA functions are effectively performed. The CT SMA is part of the Performance & Accountability unit within the CT DOL.

- (4) A summary of the monitoring reviews conducted by the SMA, including:
- a. A description of any problems, deficiencies, or improper practices the SMA identified in the delivery of services;

The North Central WDB and Hartford AJC were reviewed from June 12 to June 30, 2023. A finding is being issued to the AJC for not meeting three of the eight equity ratio indicators for Wagner-Peyser services. Three findings are being issued to the SWA as follows:

- (a) Internal documentation and guides not providing a clear definition of ES complaints.
- (b) AJCs submitted quarterly complaint logs without accompanying records for said complaints.
- (c) Not having proper outreach staffing for PY 2022.

b. A summary of the actions taken by the State Workforce Agency (SWA) to resolve the problems, deficiencies, or improper practices described in its service delivery; and

An on-site review of the Hartford AJC and services offered through its affiliate offices, overseen by the North Central LWDB and CTDOL, as well as a statewide review of Outreach and Complaint System performance for PY 2022 took place at the end of June 2023. The SWA had already acted on two of the findings at the time: providing guidance to AJCs to submit properly filled out ETA 8429's to accompany reported complaints shown in the quarterly logs, and (b) it had already hired an Outreach Worker as of 6/30/23. CTDOL's Complaint System Guide FAQ was updated and a Corrective Action Plan regarding further training on provision of services at the AJC level was submitted to the Regional Monitor Advocate by 12/18/23.

c. A summary of any technical assistance the SMA provided for the SWA and the Employment Service (ES) offices.

The SMA plans on continuing to provide MSFW Identification Training to all SWA staff on an annual basis. The last refresher training session was distributed on 3/20/23 to all job center directors and supervisors, which then instructed staff to review the material. Technical assistance regarding Equity Ratio Indicators was provided for SWA staff as well as the Hartford AJC on 12/13/22 and for the Willimantic AJC on 12/20/23. The SMA has also, and will continue to, involved SWA staff in meetings or trainings provided by the NMA or RMA, as well as other agencies or stakeholders.

(5) A summary of the outreach efforts undertaken by all significant and non-significant MSFW ES offices.

Connecticut is not a significant MSFW state, nor does it have any significant MSFW ES offices. Outreach efforts originate from CTDOL's Central Office, typically performed by an MSFW Outreach Worker. Due to the vacancy in the Outreach Worker position that went unfilled until 6/30/23, outreach was conducted by the Foreign Labor Representative, who has had prior outreach experience, and the SMA. Below is a summary of the outreach log for PY 2022.

Date	Farm	Contacts	Field Check or Visit	Notes
07/20/22	Bishop's Orchard	12	FV	Outreach to 8 H-2A and 4 seasonal workers
07/27/22	Groszyk Farms	10		Outreach to 10 H-2A workers @ CHS
07/29/22	White Gate Farm	4		Outreach to 3 H-2A and 1 seasonal worker
07/29/22	CT Valley Orchards	3	FV	Outreach to 3 H-2A workers
08/03/22	Markowski Farms	10		Outreach to H-2A workers when notified of COVID outbreak
08/10/22	Vincent Farms	2		Outreach to H-2A workers and transportation to CHS
08/15/22	Markowski Farms	20		Outreach to H-2A workers at housing to discuss issues
08/23/22	Vincent Farms	5		Outreach to H-2A workers
08/23/22	Jarmoc Farms	10		Outreach to H-2A workers and medication dropped off
08/25/22	OJ Thrall	10		Outreach to employer by SMA, answered questions on regulations
08/29/22	Christian Leaf	40	FV	Outreach to 40 H-2A and seasonal workers
09/01/22	Cromwell Growers Complaint	2		Met with 2 seasonal workers to investigate complaint
09/13/22	O J Thrall Farm	42	FV	Outreach to 42 H-2A and seasonal workers
09/23/22	Jarmoc Farms	57	FV	Outreach to 57 H-2A and seasonal workers
09/23/22	Botticello Farm	4	FV	Outreach to 4 H-2A workers
09/26/22	J.W. Anderson & Sons	1	FV	Outreach to 1 H-2A worker
09/26/22	Cromwell Growers	16	FV	Outreach to 16 H-2A Presentation about services available from them
10/12/22	Jarmac Farms	8		Outreach to H-2A and seasonal workers
10/14/22	Prides Corner Farms	48		Outreach to H-2A and seasonal workers

22				
10/18/22	Casertano Greenhouse Farms	200		Outreach to H-2A and seasonal workers with NEFWC director and staff
10/18/22	JC Farm	0		Outreach to employer, has limited # of seasonal workers
10/18/22	White Gate Farm	3		Outreach to H-2A and seasonal workers with NEFWC director and staff
10/21/22	Holmberg Orchards	3		Outreach to H2-A Workers Presentation about services available to them
10/21/22	Gottas Farm	8		Outreach to H2-A Workers Presentation about services available to them
10/21/22	Dondero Orchards	2		Outreach to H2-A Workers Presentation about services available to them
10/24/22	Kogets Farm	6		Outreach to H2-A Workers Presentation about services available to them
10/24/22	Miller Farm	19		Outreach to H2-A and seasonal Workers Presentation about services available to them
10/24/22	Oxen Hill Farm	7		Outreach to H2-A Workers Presentation about services available to them
10/27/22	Fair Weather Farm	7		Outreach to H2-A and seasonal Workers Presentation about services available to them
04/06/23	Markowski Farms	3	FV	Outreach to 2 H-2A workers and 1 seasonal
04/28/23	Hart's Greenhouse	25	FV	Outreach to H-2A workers
04/28/23	Bonnie Plants	30		Outreach to H-2A workers and 2 seasonal
04/28/23	Holmberg Orchards	3		Outreach to H2A workers
05/04/23	Planter's Choice	5		Outreach to 5 migrant workers (from PR) with NEFWC staff
05/17/23	Clinton Nursery	52	FV	Outreach to 45 H2A workers and 7 seasonal
05/17/23	Cromwell Growers	33	FV	Outreach to H2A workers- and Post-Housing Inspection Visit
05/22/23	Prides Corner Farm	184	FV	Outreach to H2A- and seasonal workers with NEFWC staff and Generation Health Center
05/24/23	Grower Direct	41	FV	Outreach to H2A -and seasonal workers
05/24/	Lindy Farm	30	FV	Outreach to H2A workers

23				
05/24/ 23	Jarmoc Tobacco	26	FV	Outreach to H2A and seasonal workers
05/24/ 23	Kogut Farm	5		Outreach to H2A workers— and Post-Housing Inspection Visit
06/06/ 23	Fair Weather Farm	19	FV	Outreach to H2A and seasonal workers— and Post-Housing Inspection Visit
06/06/ 23	Gotta's Farm	4		Outreach to H2A workers— and Post-Housing Inspection Visit
06/06/ 23	Dondero Orchard	3		Outreach to H2A workers— and Post-Housing Inspection Visit
06/06/ 23	Scott's Orchard	6		Outreach to H2A and seasonal workers— and Post-Housing Inspection Visit
06/07/ 23	Blue Hill Orchard	8		Outreach to H2A and seasonal workers— and Post-Housing Inspection Visit
06/16/ 23	Lyman Farms	8		Outreach to H2A workers— and Post-Housing Inspection Visit
06/16/ 23	Rogers Orchards	14	FV	Outreach to H2A workers
06/16/ 23	CK Greenhouses	100		Outreach to H2A workers— and Post-Housing Inspection Visit
06/16/ 23	Casertanos Greenhouses	100		Outreach to H2A workers
06/21/ 23	Prides Corner Farm	2	FC	Field Check and Post-Housing Inspection Visit

(6) A summary of the State's actions taken under the Complaint System described in part

658, Subpart E of this chapter, identifying any challenges, complaint trends, tracking resolution of complaints, findings from reviews of the Complaint System, trainings offered throughout the year, and steps taken to inform and educate MSFWs, employers, and farmworker advocacy groups about the Complaint System.

During PY 2022, CTDOL continued to promote the availability of the Job Service Complaint system to Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers. The SMA received copies of the Job Service Complaint and Apparent Violations logs from each local office at the conclusion of each calendar quarter. There were no official MSFW complaints filed during PY 2022, but some apparent violations were resolved through informal resolution. An issue has been identified and a finding issued for some complaint logs being forwarded to the SMA without accompanying ETA 8429's or any other records. The SWA staff member in charge of CTDOL's Complaint System has already instructed all AJCs that ETA 8429's are required for all complaints recorded on logs.

(7) A summary of how the SMA is working with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) sec. 167 NFJP grantees and other organizations serving farmworkers, employers and employer organizations, in the State, and an assurance that the SMA is meeting at least quarterly with representatives of these organizations. The summary should include whether the SMA has established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the NFJP grantee or other farmworker organizations in accordance with 20 CFR 653.108 (I).

Activities in which the SMA was involved in PY 2022 that promoted interagency cooperation included, but were not limited to:

Continued cooperation with NEFWC in an effort to provide MSFWs with employment and training services in a more fluid manner while avoiding duplication of services. Some outreach visits to MSFWs at farms were coordinated with NEFWC. NEFWC is also introduced to AJC staff during MSFW Identification Training sessions, allowing them to give AJC staff an overview of the services they offer to not only MSFWs, but their family members as well. Historically speaking, CTDOL has had a statewide MOU with NEFWC, its NJFP grantee, that is reviewed and renewed on a biennial basis. The current agreement signed in place is between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2024.

Coordinated with Jarmoc Farms to host University of Connecticut History 1570 honor class students on a field trip on October 12, 2022. The SMA and Foreign Labor Representative coordinated a live presentation with the then director of the Connecticut River Valley Farmworker Health Program at the same University of Connecticut class the week prior to the field trip, on October 5, 2022. Students learned about the Monitor Advocate system and its history, as well as the history behind community health centers. Students from this class have been known to end up taking on social issues as either part of their careers or volunteer work.

Continued to assist the CRVFHP and area community health centers to coordinate the provision of COVID-19 educational materials, alerting employers of assistance with planning, personal protective equipment, and vaccine availability. The SMA was also, and continues to be, a member of the CRVFHP Advisory Council, meeting with other council members at least quarterly.

Continued to remind other SMAs and SWAs the importance of getting back out on the field to see the workers and conducting pre-occupancy housing inspections in person, not virtually.

A former connection established with New Connecticut Farmer Alliance will allow CTDOL to assist some 350 farmworkers to apply for funds under the USDA's Farm and Food Workers Relief Program.

(8) A summary of the statistical and other MSFW-related data and reports gathered by SWAs and ES offices for the year, including an overview of the SMA's involvement in the SWA's reporting systems.

CTDOL has both the SMA and Outreach Worker positions structured within its Performance & Accountability unit, responsible for providing support to CTDOL's Workforce Development Business System, CTHires, as well as generating reports, providing technical support to agency programs and departments, and performing both program and administrative functions for Foreign Labor Certification (FLC), Equal Opportunity (EO) / Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the MSFW Program. The SMA is able to source and analyze performance data consistently without issues due to this structure. All MSFW registrations are reviewed, and corrected if necessary, on a quarterly basis prior to data submission to ETA.

(9) A summary of the training conducted for SWA personnel, including ES office personnel, on techniques for accurately reporting data.

The SMA provided a refresher MSFW training session on 3/20/23. Further follow-up training will take place when updates to the Complaint System take place. Data reporting will be at the center of the training, as Equity Ratio Indicators are an expected topic.

(10) A summary of activities related to the Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP) and an explanation of how those activities helped the State reach the goals and objectives described in the AOP. At the end of the 4-year AOP cycle, the summary must include a synopsis of the SWA's achievements over the previous 4 years to accomplish the goals set forth in the AOP, and a

description of the goals which were not achieved and the steps the SWA will take to address those deficiencies.

MSFWs

For PY 2022, the SMA has accompanied the Foreign Labor Representative on most of the pre-occupancy housing inspections to provide outreach to employers and help them understand some of the housing requirements, as well as some of certain shortfalls within said requirements. The overall goal is to convince employers to go above and beyond on certain regulations that end up affecting the workers in the housing, which the employers may not realize. If seasonal workers are present during these visits, the Foreign Labor Representative and SMA make sure to speak to them about services available at Job Centers and provide them with MSFW Informational Cards—containing contact information for the SMA and OW, U.S. Wage & Hour, NEFWC, Statewide Legal Services, and a number of Community Health Centers, amongst others.

The Foreign Labor Representative (assisting in the Outreach Worker role) and SMA also continued contact with NEFWC staff several times in the off-season to provide Workforce Information Services, assist workers with questions, and refer workers to the AJC for further services. During the work season, the SMA, Foreign Labor Representative, and NEFWC staff met and planned outreach visits to workers at participating farms, as well as new ones unfamiliar with our programs.

Employers and Others

The Foreign Labor Representative and SMA have continued to establish and develop their relationships with participants of the H2-A Program through frequent outreach visits and phone contact, offering the employers assistance with the screening of qualified (when applicable) workers during recruitment, providing technical assistance for compliance with Wagner-Peyser regulations and Federal/State employment laws, and acting as a resource and support system on employment related issues. The Foreign Labor Representative and SMA have also reached spoken to employers not utilizing the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS), educating them on the State Monitor Advocate System, the services available through the CTDOL, and the services and protections available to MSFWs. The Foreign Labor Representative and SMA were approached by another employer this season, under the recommendation of another employer that files job orders in relation to H-2A. This allowed the Foreign Labor Representative and the SMA to advocate and recommend the employer exceed some of the antiquated minimum requirements when it comes to housing regulations.

CTDOL has also continued to collaborate with the Puerto Rico SWA in the recruitment of job seekers to fill the positions generated by agricultural employers in Connecticut. In cases where a worker from Puerto Rico completed his/her employment contract and the employer was pleased with their performance, CTDOL and local DOL offices in Puerto Rico made note of the successful match and attempted to recruit that same individual for the same employer in the following year, thus reducing the burden of constantly retraining individuals and alleviating some of the stress that workers experience in unfamiliar working and living environments.

During PY 2022 the SMA continued his close collaboration with the Connecticut River Valley Farm Worker Health Program (CRVFHP), but has shifted his focus of collaboration to the Community

Health Centers and staff providing services to MSFWs due to recent managerial changes at the CRVFHP.

Other activities in PY 2022 included assisting new SMAs with regulatory issues and advocacy, always promoting relationship building with other agencies and stakeholders. The SMA has also tried connecting different stakeholders together to benefit MSFWs, such as New Farmer Alliance with AHEC, UConn Health, and the CRVFHP, or Yale School of Public Health with CTDOL and CRVFHP. The SMA and Foreign Labor Representative have also continued to educate University of Connecticut students about farmworkers and their plight when hosting their History 1570 class at a farm outing.

11.

[For significant MSFW ES offices, a summary of the functioning of the State's staffing program under 20 CFR 653.111.](#)

No