

## **Section II.D. Wagner-Peyser Agricultural Outreach**

*The Agricultural Outreach Plan portion of the State Plan must describe plans for providing services to the agricultural community, both for agricultural employers and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs), as described in 20 CFR 653.107, the WIA Title I final regulations, the WIA/Wagner-Peyser Act Integrated Workforce Planning Guidance, the Unified Planning Guidance, and applicable WIA Workforce Development regulations. This attachment provides greater detail on what states must include in the AOP section of the State Plan.*

The Connecticut Department of Labor's (CTDOL) Agricultural Outreach Plan details the activities planned for providing services to the agricultural community, both agricultural employers and Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFWs), for the period of July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014, and is prepared in accordance with 20 CFR 653.107, WIA Title I final regulations, WIA/Wagner-Peyser Act Integrated Workforce Planning Guidance, the Unified Planning Guidance, and applicable WIA Workforce Development regulations.

### **II.D.i. Assessment of Need**

#### ***Review of the previous year's agricultural activity in the State.***

In PY 2012, there was no change from PY 2011, in the number of farms or MSFWs working in Connecticut. Approximately 4,900 farms are located in Connecticut with a total of 400,000 acres dedicated to farming based on census data. The New England Farm Workers Council (NEFWC) (CTDOL's WIA Section 167 Grantee) estimates that there were 7,000 MSFWs working in Connecticut during this period. CTDOL references these estimates because we cannot determine these numbers based on our own resources. Connecticut is not a significant state in regards to MSFW

During PY 2012, agricultural employers in Connecticut continued to seek qualified U.S. workers through the placement of job orders with CTDOL. Several employers were allowed to recruit foreign labor due to a shortage of U.S. workers available for agricultural positions. The majority of growers continued to recruit on their own through word of mouth, while others obtained workers through Farm Labor Contractors.

The CTDOL continued to promote the recruitment assistance available through the Department of Labor in outreach contacts to several agricultural employers throughout the state. CTDOL's Alien Labor Certification staff in collaboration with the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) continued a screening process for job seekers interested in agricultural job openings. This screening process not only ensured that qualified applicants are referred but also allowed the prospective applicant to gain a thorough understanding of the terms and conditions of each job opening. This process of carefully matching job seekers with prospective employers proved to be instrumental in establishing credibility with our agricultural employers.

In PY 2011, 39 agricultural employers participated in the H-2A program. These employers placed approximately 59 job orders and requested a total of 752 workers. Approximately 182 referrals were made to these positions. For PY 2012 year-to-date (July 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013), 25 agricultural employers participated in the H-2A program. These employers placed approximately 33 job orders and requested a total of 367 workers. Approximately 13 referrals were made to these positions as of March 31, 2013. Referrals included both local workers and workers referred from Puerto Rico, Connecticut's primary supply state.

CTDOL records also indicate that in PY 2011, approximately 11,600 non-agricultural job orders with entry-level experience and less than high school educational requirements were placed in CT Job Central. Year-to-date PY 2012 records indicate the 24,897 non-agricultural positions were posted during the period of July 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013.

These counts do not reflect job orders placed by employers through indexing.

***Review of the previous year's MSFW activity in the State.***

<b>Major Crop Activity in Connecticut PY 2012</b>		
Crop	Months of Heavy Agricultural Activity	Primary Region
<b>Tobacco</b> (Shade & Broadleaf)	June through September	North Central
<b>Fruit</b> (Apples, Peaches, Pears)	July through October	Central
<b>Nursery</b>	February through July	South Central
<b>Greenhouse</b>	March – June, and October - December	South Central

<b>Review of Previous Year's MSFW Activity in Connecticut (Estimates from New England Farm Workers Council) PY 2012</b>		
Crop	MSFWs Employed	Labor Shortage
<b>Tobacco</b> (Shade & Broadleaf)	5950	Yes
<b>Fruit</b> (Apples, Peaches, Pears)	350	Yes
<b>Nursery</b>	350	Yes
<b>Greenhouse</b>	350	Yes

***Projected level of agricultural activity in the State for the coming year.***

Connecticut Labor Market indicators, as calculated by the CTDOL Office of Research, project an increase in agricultural related employment by 2.4% from 2008 to 2018. Overall, these indicators project a total employment growth of 4.6%; while the largest

sectors are split: construction is expected to grow by 2.8% and manufacturing is expected to dip by 5.4%. For PY 2013, employment levels are expected to remain the same although a slight increase in the numbers of farms utilizing the recruitment assistance and listing positions with the CTDOL is expected.

***Projected number of MSFWs in the State for the coming year, which must take into account data supplied by WIA 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations and federal and/or State agency data sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and ETA.***

Crop activity and the projected number of MSFWs in each crop activity are projected to remain the same for PY 2013

<b>Estimated Major Crop Activity in Connecticut PY 2013</b>		
Crop	Months of Heavy Agricultural Activity	Primary Region
<b>Tobacco</b> (Shade & Broadleaf)	June through September	North Central
<b>Fruit</b> (Apples, Peaches, Pears)	July through October	Central
<b>Nursery</b>	February through July	South Central
<b>Greenhouse</b>	March – June, and October - December	South Central

<b>Estimated MSFW Activity in Connecticut (Estimates from New England Farm Workers Council) PY 2013</b>		
Crop	MSFWs Employed	Labor Shortage
<b>Tobacco</b> (Shade & Broadleaf)	5950	Yes
<b>Fruit</b> (Apples, Peaches, Pears)	350	Yes
<b>Nursery</b>	350	Yes
<b>Greenhouse</b>	350	Yes

***Statement of the consideration given to the State Monitor Advocate's (SMA) recommendation as set forth in the annual summary developed under §653.108(t).***

Connecticut's MSFW staff continues to strive to improve performance. Based on the annual summary of services to MSFWs, including an assessment of activities under these regulations, any recommendations from the SMA to improving the program including any corrective actions will be considered by the CTDOL.

**II.D.ii. Proposed Outreach Activities**

***The proposed outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of the MSFWs in the state and to locate and to contact MSFWs who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the local offices.***

***The tools which will be used to conduct outreach contacts, including personal contact, printed matter, videotapes, slides, and/or cassette recordings.***

The SMA shall make written and oral presentations to MSFWs, in both Spanish and English, at their living quarters and in common gathering areas. The information presented will include the following:

- Agricultural and non-agricultural job openings
- Training options
- Support services (Statewide Legal Services of CT, Migrant Health programs)
- Vocational testing
- Career counseling
- Job development
- Information on the Job Service Complaint System
- Farm worker rights (Federal and State Law, employment related protections)
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Unemployment Compensation Insurance Information
- Services provided by the New England Farm Workers' Council (NEFWC)

During outreach visits, the SMA will provide workers with outreach packets. These packets contain written material in Spanish and English regarding CTDOL's Apprenticeship Program, Youth Employment Services, Connecticut's Job Bank, ESL classes, Hot Jobs, Health Care, Unemployment Compensation Filing, and the addresses and phone numbers for all of the local *CTWorks* offices throughout the state. MSFWs will also be provided with a bilingual wallet size card (in Spanish and English) that identifies the names and telephone numbers of organizations offering support services.

The SMA also provides MSFWs with information on seasonal or short-term non-agricultural job openings that he/she may transition to when his/her agricultural contract has ended.

***Other Requirements:***

***State Monitor Advocate. The plan must contain a statement that indicates that the SMA has been afforded the opportunity to approve and/or comment on the PY 2013 AOP.***

The State Monitor Advocate has been afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the State Agricultural Outreach Plan. Any comments received after the submission date will be forwarded to the Regional Monitor Advocate, under separate cover.

***Review and Public Comment. The plan must provide information indicating that WIA Section 167 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 State AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited and any comments received and State responses to those suggestions.***

The WIA section 167 NFJP Grantee, the New England Farm Worker's Council has been afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the State Agricultural Outreach Plan. Any comments received after the submission date will be forwarded to the Regional Monitor Advocate, under separate cover.

**II.D.iii. Services Provided to agricultural employers and MSFWs through the One-Stop Delivery System**

***Services Provided to Agricultural Employers through the One-Stop Delivery System. The plan must describe efforts that will be taken to provide services to agricultural employers in States with an adequate supply of U.S. workers and in those States where a shortage of workers is anticipated. The services provided to agricultural employers can be incorporated into the section of the WIA/Wagner-Peyser plan on serving employers in general.***

The CTDOL continues to work with agricultural employers to identify their needs, assist in the recruitment of qualified U.S. workers, provide technical assistance for compliance with Employment Services regulation and Federal/State employment laws, and serve as a resource and support system to employers on employment related issues.

The SMA maintains close relationships with all of the growers participating in the H-2A program. The SMA disseminates information to agricultural employers about the full range of services available from CTDOL. The SMA also targets his outreach efforts to agricultural employers that might benefit from CTDOL's recruitment assistance.

In the course of having numerous discussions with agricultural employers in the state, many identified with the challenges of finding qualified workers. Most employers stated that many of the workers referred to them through our supply state (Puerto Rico), had no prior exposure to farm work, did not fully understand the terms and conditions of their employment contracts and didn't feel comfortable living and working in a rural setting. These deficiencies have resulted in higher rates of job abandonment compared to previous growing seasons. CTDOL in collaboration with the DOL in Puerto Rico has attempted to resolve these issues through a coordinated outreach effort to job seekers in the rural areas of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Recruiting available job seekers that already live and work in rural communities and are already familiar with the tasks associated with farming are a better match. This effort along with a more thorough screening process ensures success for all parties involved in the process. In cases where a farm 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. This "system" not only eliminates the need to train the returning workers but also reduces the stress that farm workers often experience in coming to a new state, living and working in an environment that is unfamiliar to them and understanding their employer's operation. This year CTDOL has continued working with local offices in Puerto Rico. The following DOL offices in Puerto Rico have continued to participate in this recruitment process with CTDOL in PY 2012: Bayamon, Ponce, Guayama, Mayaguez, Aguadilla and San German.

To augment CTDOL's outreach efforts, the SMA continues a cooperative agreement with the NEFWC, in an effort to integrate the employment and training services of both agencies and avoid the duplication of services to MSFWs. This partnership also enhances CTDOL's ability to achieve maximum penetration into the farm worker population by reaching local workers as well as MSFWs. In addition, the SMA has developed strategic partnerships with community based organizations to maximize resources and provide support services to MSFWs as well as agricultural employers.

The SMA has:

- Collaborated with the Regional USDOL Wage and Hour staff and participated in the Winter and Summer Connecticut Nursery & Landscaping Association field day. The SMA presented information on MSPA and H-2A regulations to agricultural employers.
- Continued partnerships with community based organizations such as University of Connecticut School of Medicine, ConnectiCOSH, Statewide Legal Services of CT, Community Health Service providers and local Board of Education Migratory Programs.
- Distributed informational brochures and posters on Pesticide Safety and Heat Stroke Prevention to all growers participating in the H-2A program.
- Partnered with the NEFWC to provide services to local farm workers who needed support services.
- Presented information to students at the University of Connecticut in a class titled "Migrant Workers In Connecticut." SMA provided information on his own job duties as well as the variety of employment and support services available to MSFWs through CTDOL's programs.
- Participated in the University of Connecticut Migrant Farm Worker Clinic Symposium by presenting information about MSFWs to medical students who visit farms and conduct free medical screenings for farm workers.
- Conducted field checks with USDOL Wage and Hour on several farms in the state.

These partnerships provide the SMA with an opportunity to share his knowledge of farm worker needs, characteristics and concerns with other organizations and develop solutions to any deficiencies in the delivery of services to MSFWs.

*Services provided to MSFWs through the One-Stop Delivery System. The plan must provide specific information on how core, intensive, and training services required under WIA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the One-Stop delivery system. States should provide information on how MSFWs will be provided staff-assisted services and how MSFWs will be served in an electronic environment in the One-Stop Career Center and/or affiliate sites. States should consider how they will enable these One-Stop customers to advance their skills and be competitive in a local, regional and global economy.*

**Planning Data for the Upcoming Year:**

CTWorks Centers offer integrated and universally accessible employment services that effectively and efficiently meet the needs of all customers including MSFWs. Through existing partnerships in the One-Stop Centers, MSFWs have access to the following services through a single delivery system: Wagner-Peyser labor exchange services such as career counseling, vocational testing, veterans employment and training services, resume writing, job search assistance, reemployment workshops and job referral. Other One-Stop services include adult, dislocated worker and youth activities under WIA, adult education, apprenticeship training, vocational rehabilitation training under BRS (Bureau of Rehabilitation 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. Many of the partners working under the One-Stop Delivery System are co-located in our CTWorks Centers which allows for a seamless delivery of services to job seekers. Once registered into CTWBS (Connecticut Works Business System), all information and referrals are maintained electronically.

Training programs available through the CTWorks Centers are comprehensive and flexible in meeting the diverse needs of Connecticut's population. This allows job seekers with varying levels of education and experience the opportunity to upgrade their skills in order to meet the competitive needs of employers.

Staff encourages non English-speaking customers to take advantage of the free ESL classes offered through Adult Education or CTDOL's WIA Section 167 Grantee. This is a critical component of promoting life long learning and developing the basic skills needed to secure employment and pursue career growth.

Staff in the One-Stop Centers has been trained in the proper identification and coding of MSFW's and well educated on the multiple barriers of employment many MSFW's face. The SMA will continue to conduct on-site monitoring of the CTWorks Centers to ensure compliance with the Job Service regulations and offer technical assistance to staff as needed.

CTDOL is committed to achieving full compliance with the federally mandated minimum equity indicator requirements for serving MSFW's.

The SMA will continue to reinforce positive relationships with farm workers, farmers, and other non-profit organizations while conducting outreach activities. During the next year CTDOL plans to continue outreach to local farm workers as a means of engaging local workers in the full range of services offered in the *CTWorks* One Stop Career Centers.

The SMA maintains frequent contact with growers in the H-2A program in an effort to respond quickly to their labor needs.

In PY 2013 CTDOL will continue to offer the following services to agricultural employers and MSFWs:

- Assistance with the placement of local and interstate job orders
- Assistance in the recruitment of qualified workers
- Dissemination of information on, and referral to organizations that assist MSFWs including New England Farm Workers' Council, CT Migrant Health Network, CT River Valley Farm workers Health Program, ConnectiCOSH, University of Connecticut Medical School, Statewide Legal Services of CT, and Board of Education Migratory Program
- Mediation and Interpretation services
- Complaint assistance
- Technical assistance to ensure that housing requirements meet Federal standards
- As needed, assistance in making appointments and arranging transportation for individual MSFWs or members of their family to and from local offices or other appropriate agencies
- Technical assistance on compliance with employment services regulations and all other Federal and State laws

#### **II.D.iv. Numerical Goals**

***The number of MSFWs to be contacted during the fiscal year by Wagner-Peyser staff. The number of MSFWs planned to be contacted by other agencies under cooperative arrangements during the fiscal year also should be included in the plan. These numerical goals must be based on the number of MSFWs estimated to be in the State in the coming year, taking into account the varying concentration of MSFWs during the seasons in each geographic area, the range of services needed in each area and the number of employment services and/or cooperating agency staff who will conduct outreach. The numerical goals that must be included in the agricultural outreach plan are in reference only to the proposed outreach activities and are not negotiated performance targets.***

Number of MSFWs to be contacted by Wagner-Peyser staff in PY 2013 = 300  
(In Connecticut, the SMA conducts all outreach activities.)

Number of MSFWs to be contacted by the New England Farm Workers Council (NEFWC) WIA 167 National Farmworkers Job Program (NFJP) grantee in PY 2013 = 216

Number of agricultural employers CTDOL will contact for the purpose of obtaining job orders and conducting job development = 65

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

In Connecticut, the NEFWC estimates 7,000 MSFW for PY 2013. Since Connecticut is not considered a significant MSFW state, the SMA handles all the outreach for this program. Our goal is to reach 300 MSFWs with information on our programs and services in PY 2013. The majority of contacts with MSFWs will be conducted between June and October. The SMA will conduct visits to agricultural employers between November and May for recruiting assistance.

***The level of Wagner-Peyser funding to be used for outreach during the fiscal year.***

The level of Wagner-Peyser funding specifically for outreach activity in Connecticut has not changed. Connecticut will continue to provide services and outreach to MSFWs at the same levels as previous years.

**II.D.v. Data Analysis**

**PY 2011 History**

- Number of agricultural job orders received = 59
- Number of agricultural job openings = 752
- Number of agricultural job orders filled with U.S. workers = 8
- Number of agricultural job openings filled with U.S. workers = 80
- Percentage of agricultural job openings that were filled with US workers = 10%
- Number of interstate clearance orders received = 0
- Number of interstate clearance orders initiated = 59
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**PY 2012 Year-to-Date (July 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013) History**

- Number of agricultural job orders received = 33
- Number of agricultural job openings = 367
- Number of agricultural job orders filled with U.S. workers = 3
- Number of agricultural job openings filled with U.S. workers = 13
- Percentage of agricultural job openings that were filled with US workers = 3.5%
- Number of interstate clearance orders received = 0
- Number of interstate clearance orders initiated = 33

**PY 2013 Plan**

- Number of agricultural job orders expected to be received = 75
- Number of agricultural job openings projected = 750
- Number of agricultural job orders projected to be filled with U.S. workers = 8

- Number of agricultural job openings projected to be filled with U.S. workers = 80
- Percentage of agricultural job openings projected to be filled with U.S. workers = 10%
- Estimated number of interstate clearance orders CTDOL will receive = 0
- Estimated number of interstate clearance orders CTDOL will initiate = 75

The Connecticut Department of Labor's Agricultural Outreach Plan for PY 2013 was prepared by the Operations Coordinator for the Alien Labor Certification and Migrant/Seasonal Farm Worker Programs.