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**Guide for the development of a nutrition-related
disaster plan for farmworkers (draft) 1993**



**Guide
for the Development
of a Nutrition-Related
Disaster Plan for Farmworkers**

(Draft)

May 1993

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Prepared by

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A. Introduction

This document is a guide to assist program providers in developing a disaster plan for migrant and farmworkers, with particular emphasis on nutrition. Recognizing the broad extent of disaster on farmworkers, nutrition-related needs cannot be completely isolated from other needs during disaster, such as housing, clothing, income, relocation, and employment assistance. However, for purposes of this project, nutrition-related assistance will be the main focus.

This guide was prepared with funds provided by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. It serves as a key component of the National Farmworker Nutrition Project, with the goal of increasing access to nutrition-related services and education to farmworkers. It is intended to provide general guidance to states. These general guidelines should be considered as flexible for providers to address the many variations in available services and needs in each locality. Although states do vary in structure of programs and coordination, this model can act as a tool in the development of a unique plan for each state. By the end of our project, we will provide a finalized model disaster plan that incorporates changes presented both during and after the National Conference on Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers.

B. Why Develop A Nutrition-related Disaster Plan for Farmworkers?

Farmworkers are affected in many ways by crises, some predictable, others completely unexpected. These include freezes, droughts, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, crop infestations, and mass lay-offs due to farm closings. In "normal" times, the strain of daily life for farmworkers is difficult physically as well as economically. The added burden of uncertainty created by a crisis only accentuates the hardships which farmworkers face. When disaster strikes, farmworkers can be left without jobs and the resulting income to feed and sustain their families for the balance of the year. No income, in effect, means no health care, no home, no transportation, and of course, no food.

Both the immediate and long-term effects of job loss for farmworkers can be devastating. The immediate situation for farmworker nutrition can become critical if food assistance programs are not mobilized. Seasonal farmworkers often bear the greater long-term impact of the problem, since they do not travel to other areas to obtain work, and generally live year-round on what they make from one season's worth of farm work. For seasonal workers, a disaster in the peak of the season could require the need for both immediate and longer-term assistance (longer than that which is provided under the emergency unemployment assistance program).

Among both migrant and seasonal farmworkers, countless thousands have gone hungry in past disasters because no prior plan was in place to identify farmworkers as a needy group or immediately address their specific needs.

Coordination and collaboration are necessary in order to expedite efficient delivery of services.

Waiting for federal sources of assistance is often a trying experience during periods of emergency because of special problems related to serving migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Some migrant farmworkers who were Hurricane Andrew victims

were denied assistance because of their living and working only a few months in the state which meant that they could not be considered as legal residents of the state. For others, immediate assistance was not provided well past the period of critical need. The timeliness of receipt of services by disaster victims is essential. Because of situations like these, service providers have reached the conclusion that all avenues of immediate assistance, except in exceptional cases, must come from the local resources, and be provided by those agencies that know the farmworkers best. Otherwise, precious time will be wasted, and farmworker needs will not be appropriately served.

Most present state-level emergency operations plans are intended to be broad in scope. They do not, for the most part, focus on very specific population groups or issues, such as the nutritional needs of farmworkers. Many plans have annexes which relate to post-disaster food distribution for "special populations", or simply refer the reader to the Department of Health/Social Services for more complete information on how the needs of these groups will be met.

The purpose of this plan is to help solve this often-overlooked problem. It will provide a structure by which a community can be prepared for a farmworker-related disaster at any time. Its implementation has the potential to avert critical nutrition situations during times of mass lay-offs caused by crop freezes, crop infestations, or other emergencies.

C. Objectives of the Disaster Plan

This plan has the following objectives:

- ❖ To define key players (community agencies) in service provision in the community, and determine the roles they will play in disaster situations affecting farmworkers.
- ❖ To provide those community agencies with a framework from which to work so that they are prepared for a disaster situation.
- ❖ To facilitate the planning of a deliberate, logical course of action to be taken by community agencies when responding to an emergency.
- ❖ To establish a workable course of action for the recovery and rehabilitation period after immediate assistance has been provided.
- ❖ To determine what federal, state, and local food assistance programs are available and how to incorporate them into each phase of the planning process.

D. Essential Elements of the Plan

A disaster plan is a statement of what will be done and who will do it in the event of a disaster or other emergency. It must discuss how various agencies and organizations will be mobilized to accomplish the functions necessary to prepare for, respond to and recover from a disaster or crisis situation. Most state-level plans provide only limited information on agricultural workers. Because financial resources and services are not always sufficient or timely in a federal or state plan, large farmworker states have had to coordinate community-based resources out of necessity.

In order to prepare yourself, several questions will need to be answered as you devise your plan. They include:

- ❖ What types of assistance programs are presently available to farmworkers during normal times?
- ❖ What types of disaster financial assistance is available? From whom? What is the application and approval process?
- ❖ What programs are available in times of disaster?
- ❖ What successful local models exist?
- ❖ In your community, how were farmworker-related disasters handled in the past?
- ❖ What are the channels of food assistance in your state/region?
- ❖ How can food assistance be expedited (relying on local resources first, then later looking to state or federal resources)?
- ❖ What needs to be included in the plan that would help farmworkers get assistance, as well as employment and training services, health care, housing, transportation, etc.?

- ❖ How can your organization implement such a plan in your area?
- ❖ How can agencies collaborate to improve communication and coordination of services?

Every state's plan will be different, according to the characteristics and needs of the farmworkers and the surrounding community, the resources available, and the type of disaster encountered. Nevertheless, there is a set of essential elements which must be included in any nutrition-related disaster plan for farmworkers:

- ❖ A compilation of maps of all labor camps and farmworker communities (all tested for accuracy), numbers of farmworkers at each, and predominant languages spoken. Thus, if an evacuation or other assistance is needed, the essential elements for retrieval are in place.
- ❖ A list of all food-related community resources available in the event that farmworkers are without jobs. How much food is available at the present time? How much food could be conceivably collected if there is a freeze tomorrow? Is there enough for the farmworkers and for how long? What organizations can provide food distribution and/or preparation? What local, state, and federal food assistance programs are the most quickly accessible? Within how many days could food be received from these areas?
- ❖ A logical method for assessing the damage immediately following the disaster, and a list of who will carry out which task, including reporting that information to the Red Cross, FEMA, or other agency. Decide if the local community has the resources and capability to tackle the situation itself, or if outside (regional/state/federal) assistance is needed?
- ❖ A chain of command for reporting the disaster so that all necessary organizations/persons are contacted. If a governor or presidential declaration has been made, who gives instructions to farmworker organizers, and to whom are they accountable? This structure is crucial during the first critical hours/days of a disaster.

- ❖ A list of local, regional, and state resources which can be called upon for assistance during times of disaster (a school, for example, could supply a gymnasium for temporary shelter for farmworkers).
- ❖ A list of organizations which should be notified in the case of a farmworker-affected disaster. This list should include organizations which can provide translators, drivers, and other volunteers. The media should also be contacted to report on the event so that the community is aware of the crisis in their community and provide documentation for local, state, and federal officials.
- ❖ After the immediate response period is past, set up a plan for helping farmworkers apply for unemployment assistance, expedited food stamps, temporary food assistance, and other government programs. Assist in training and placing them for jobs as necessary.
- ❖ Refer to migrant health centers for medical needs, especially those with nutrition-related conditions. Assist especially women and children with their health care questions and concerns. Work in collaboration with health care personnel.

E. The Phases of the Disaster Management Process

Refined over the years, FEMA has developed a helpful way of structuring the disaster planning process, which it uses primarily in emergency situations. Using this format will facilitate an understanding of FEMA's process, and also assist them with incorporating your plan into their overall strategy. Your state FEMA representative can provide you with more thorough information about procedures for you state. The four major phases are as follows:

- I. Mitigation
- II. Preparedness
- III. Response
- IV. Recovery

I. Mitigation: Coordinating Your Resources

Mitigation activities are those that either prevent the occurrence of an emergency or reduce the community's vulnerability in ways that minimize the adverse impact of a disaster or other emergency.

Examples include:

- ❖ Learning where the farmworkers are, and making maps to get to all camps in your area.
- ❖ Meeting with other service providers to create a summary report on characteristics and needs of farmworkers in your community. Include ethnic groups and related food preferences and special needs.
- ❖ Promoting good communication and trust with farmworkers. Keep up the outreach as much as possible.

Several ideas for disaster mitigation have been identified with the hindsight of those in Florida, California and other states where major disaster have occurred. Hopefully, their words of wisdom can guide you in developing your own state/regional farmworker-oriented disaster plan. Their recommendations are as follows:

1. Before attempting to write a plan, identify key people in the community who work with farmworkers. These could include representatives from migrant and community health centers, migrant head start, migrant education, employment and training agencies, migrant housing, and migrant ministry. Also include voluntary/service agencies and community-based organizations which assist during a disaster, such as the local chapter of the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, and churches (see Attachment #1).
2. Hold a planning meeting to compile a joint summary report of characteristics and special needs of farmworkers in your community. This would include defining the various ethnic groups which comprise farmworkers, numbers of each, and months when they are present in your area. Also prepare maps of each known camp and farmworker residences (for seasonals), with detailed directions for transportation purposes. Any special needs, such as translators, which should be known during an evacuation or other emergency service, should be noted in as much detail as possible.
3. Discuss roles and responsibilities of each key service provider with farmworkers during the season (year-round for seasonals), i.e., who provides health care, and how? Who provides food assistance, and in what way? child care? education? employment and training? legal assistance? Are there ESL services provided? Are there other outreach workers not previously mentioned? (paid or volunteer). Translators available? Is there a farmworker coalition or Governor's Council on Farmworkers already in existence? Make sure there is!

4. Who will provide direction and control during times of disaster? Designate an overall leader and two people from each farmworker agency to be responsible for insuring that tasks are carried out.

5. Think about the kinds of disasters your community/region could have (or is more prone to having) which could affect farmworkers? Include employment crises, such as mass lay-offs, job displacements, labor surpluses, farm closings, etc., as well as natural ones which could affect agriculture, such as droughts, freezes, floods, crop infestations, hurricanes, hail, etc. Consider the worst case scenarios and sketch out a respective plan of action for each.

6. Define roles of all farmworker service providers in your community, no matter how small their role. **Develop a Responsibility Matrix** (chart) for each agency's responsibilities during normal, non-crisis times. Use a "P" in the grid for a **primary** responsibility, and an "S" to designate a **supportive** role. This will help you to see clearly the tasks at hand during the mitigation phase, and which responsibilities will be designated to the particular service providers. On the following page is an example of a Responsibility Matrix:

Responsibility Matrix: Mitigation Phase

Key Players and Tasks

Area Shelters and Community Centers	Planning & Coordination of FW Services	Provision of Primary Health Care to FWs	Provision of Education to Adults, ESL	Education and Child Care	Provision of Legal Assistance, Immigration	Assist Application for Food Samps, Other Progs.	Transport FWs	Report on FWs and Their Situation	Provision of Constructing Shelters for FWs	Translation	Job Training & Placement	Inspect Living Conditions of FWs	Other Supportive Services	Other	Other	Other
Coop. Extension																
American Red Cross																
Churches																
Dept. of Health and Human Services																
Dept. of Public Safety																
Dept. of Transportation																
JTPA § 402																
FEMA.																
Foodbanks																
Head Start																
Housing Agency																
Legal Services																
Local Media																
Migrant Comm. Health Service																
Migrant Ed. Schools																
Salvation Army																
State Employ. Offices																

P = Primary

S = Support

II. Preparedness: Getting Ready for Imminent Emergency

Preparedness activities, programs, and systems are those that exist prior to an emergency and are used to support and enhance response to an emergency or disaster. Planning, training, and practice drills are among the activities conducted under this phase.

Examples include:

- ❖ Forming community farmworker advisory groups, task forces, or coalitions to start planning for disaster preparedness
- ❖ Training of farmworker personnel in the emergency management process.
- ❖ Conducting “preparedness education” for farmworkers by all service providers to alert farmworkers of what to do, where to go, food bank locations, and other resources or contact people available to them (including bilingual translating services).

1. Determine how each agency’s role will change during the preparedness phase, by answering the following questions:

- ❖ Which group will provide **primary** responsibility for each service?
- ❖ Which will provide a **supportive** role to the primary agency?
- ❖ How will some agencies’ responsibilities be more concentrated?
- ❖ How will others be expanded and stretched?
- ❖ Will coordination and channels of communication be any different?
- ❖ Will there be any “new” players in the picture?

Develop another Responsibility Matrix to reflect those changes.

This information, once completed for your state or region, should be shared with your state emergency management representative for inclusion as an annex in the state emergency disaster plan (see Attachment #3). This annex will be important for state-level personnel to know in realizing the availability of farmworker service provider personnel for providing assistance to this often difficult-to reach population. As a farmworker emergency planner, your preparedness could save valuable time in mobilizing emergency assistance, and in addressing the crisis needs of farmworkers.

Remember that when changes in service responsibility occurs, or when programs gain or lose funding for such services, this matrix will need to be updated and distributed to all appropriate agencies. A review of this information should take place at least twice annually.

Responsibility Matrix: Preparedness Phase
Key Players and Tasks

	Public Information	Direction & Control	Conduct Preparedness Ed. for Farmworkers	Maintain & Increase Food Reserves	Maintain Housing	Update & Verify Evac. Plan & Alternate Shelter	Transportation	Translation	Counselling	Alert Schools & Prepare for Location	Increase Medicine Supply	Hire Workers & Site Coordinators	Recruit Volunteers for Assessment & Distribution	Conduct Meetings to Verify Situation & Coordinate Activities	Child Care & Emergency Preparation	Other	Other
Area Shelters and Community Centers																	
Coop. Extension																	
American Red Cross																	
Churches																	
Dept. of Health and Human Services																	
Dept. of Public Safety																	
Dept. of Transportation																	
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Migrant Comm. Health Service																	
Migrant Ed. Schools																	
Salvation Army																	
State Employ. Offices																	

P = Primary

S = Support

2. Check your list for any other people or agencies within the community who could be available to assist with food collection and distribution, unemployment assistance, alternative job training and placement, eligibility determination for program participation, and provision of medical services. Exhaust all possibilities, i.e., volunteers, donors of services, or funds for service delivery.

3. Determine if federal, state, and/or local agencies will allow flexibility in meeting eligibility requirements for food and other assistance programs during times of disaster. Speak with all appropriate agencies, both public and private, which may have special provisions for assisting farmworkers.

4. Start and maintain a complete journal of daily events, and save all pertinent newspaper articles about the disaster and its implications all over the state. This information will be useful in requests for assistance.

III. Response: Moving into Action

Response involves activities and programs designed to address the immediate and short-term effects at the onset of an emergency or disaster. It helps to reduce casualties and damage and to speed recovery. Response activities include direction and control, warning, evacuation, and other similar operations.

Examples include:

- ❖ Assessing level and extent of need among farmworkers; what happened, where, how many people affected, how much damage to crops, living quarters, etc.
- ❖ Transporting farmworkers for assistance
- ❖ Evacuating farmworkers to shelters
- ❖ Supplying food/medical assistance to farmworkers

- ❖ Notifying the community about farmworkers' need for help. This includes notifying assistance agencies such as the local social welfare office, health department, Farmer's Home Administration, American Red Cross, etc.
- ❖ Notifying the media
- ❖ Soliciting donations from the community
- ❖ Writing grant proposals requesting assistance from USDA, Dislocated Worker Program, United Way, etc.
- ❖ Relocating families
- ❖ Contacting large area food banks and the Second Harvest Network for rapid direct food assistance
- ❖ Mobilizing volunteers for assistance around the clock for various logistical needs.
- ❖ Gathering donations from churches for clothing and canned goods.

It is especially important in this phase to again develop a **Responsibility Matrix**. This will be important in identifying role changes as full-swing immediate response activities are carried out. Although disasters can cause unanticipated situations, your pre-planning with other service providers will pay off in improved coordination, teamwork, and rapid assistance to farmworkers. Don't forget to inform state-level and federal people of the situation and submit to them a statement of need and a proposal for assistance.

Responsibility Matrix: Response Phase Key Players and Tasks

	Public Information	Direction & Control	Reconnaissance & Reporting	Evacuation	Medical Services	Transportation	Search and Rescue	Coordination of Volunteer Services	Relocation to New Facilities	Provide Facility for Shelter	Food & Clothing Distribution	Processing of Expedited Assistance	Operation of Disaster Assistance Centers	Apply for Federal, State, Local Assistance	Determining Eligibility for Services	Facilitating Legal Affairs	Financial Assistance
Area Shelters and Community Centers																	
Coop. Extension																	
American Red Cross																	
Churches																	
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IV. Recovery: Returning to Normal

Recovery is the phase that involves restoring systems to normal. Short-term recovery actions are taken to assess damage and return vital life-support systems to minimum operating standards; long-term recovery actions may continue for many years.

Examples include:

- ❖ Assessing damage to crops and housing
- ❖ Estimating the extent and length of income loss for farmworkers
- ❖ Reconstructing damaged buildings
- ❖ Job training and placement for farmworkers
- ❖ Facilitating farmworkers' application for state, federal, and other assistance
- ❖ Continuing distribution of food and clothes

1. After the crisis period has past, the long, often slow process of normalization begins. In order to have an income, farmworkers will need to either move to another area to work, or find employment in non-agricultural jobs. It is still important during this less life-threatening stage to be concerned about farmworkers' basic needs being met (food, shelter, clothing, etc.). Employment and training organizations can be a valuable resource. Food and health-related needs can be met by migrant health centers, food pantries, and other local assistance programs. The farmworker employment and training agencies funded under the Job Training Partnership Act, Title IV, Section 402, can be mobilized for assistance if they have supportive service funds budgeted. Federal assistance programs should also be providing substantial aid to farmworkers, both in supplemental feeding programs, and in individual and family assistance programs.

2. As the need for immediate assistance passes, the roles of service providers changes once again. It will still be necessary to maintain certain programs, such as housing, and some food assistance until farmworkers are relocated, trained and/or placed into alternative jobs. Employment and training agencies play a key role at this point in this rehabilitative process. **Develop a final Responsibility Matrix** which reflects this. Keep in mind that this and each of the other Responsibility Matrices which you have constructed will need to be updated every year to reflect changes in farmworker service provider roles and grant monies available for programs and services.

3. This phase also involves evaluation of recovery efforts, and is a good time to meet again with your farmworker council or coalition to know how to better prepare for the next disaster.

Responsibility Matrix: Recovery Phase
Key Players and Tasks

	Public Information	Direction & Control	Assessment of Damage	Maintain Medical Care Services	Crises Counselling	Clothes & Food Distribution & Collection	Transportation of Farmworkers	Job Training & Placement	Relocation	Maintain Food Reserves	Building Reconstruction	Evaluation of Situation	Other	Other	Other	Other
Area Shelters and Community Centers																
Coop. Extension																
American Red Cross																
Churches																
Dept. of Health and Human Services																
Dept. of Public Safety																
Dept. of Transportation																
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Migrant Ed. Schools																
Salvation Army																
State Employ. Offices																

P = Primary

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F. Model Plan (Draft)

This portion of the guide will be developed after the National Conference on Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers and will be included in the final copy.

G. Attachments

1. Federal Food Assistance Programs
2. Community Resources
3. Nutrition Facilitators and FEMA Representatives by State
4. Florida Freeze Report
5. Florida State Advisory Committee's Hurricane Andrew Report
6. California Freeze Report

Attachment 2: Community Resources

This is a sample list. Some of these organizations may or may not be in your community. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather, a beginning list to which you can add local organizations in your area.

Agriculture Extension Service

American Friends Service Committee

American Red Cross

Catholic Charities

Department of Agriculture

Department of Community Affairs

Department of Education

Department of Health and Human Services

Department of Housing

Department of Information Resources

Department of Public Safety

Department of Transportation

Employment and Training Agencies

Environmental Protection Agency

General Services Commission

Institutes/teachers of English as a second language

local foodbank/ area Second Harvest Foodbank Network affiliate

local newspapers

local radio stations

local TV stations

Public Utility Commission

Salvation Army

State Emergency Management Office

United Way

Volunteers of America

Information on disaster management and research can be found at state FEMA offices and also at the Natural Hazards Observer, published and distributed by:

Natural Hazards Research and Applications Information Center

Institute of Behavioral Science #6

University of Colorado

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