

# BITTER SUGAR:

MIGRANT FARMWORKER NUTRITION AND ACCESS TO SERVICE IN MINNESOTA

Resource ID#: 3650

Bitter Sugar: Migrant Farmworker Nutrition and  
Access to Service in Minnesota



A REPORT BY THE  
MINNESOTA FOOD EDUCATION  
AND RESOURCE CENTER

A PROGRAM  
OF THE  
URBAN COALITION



## Vision

*"Our vision is an inclusive community that honors and draws on the strength of the cultures and aspirations of its many different peoples where everyone enjoys economic and social justice."*

## Mission

*"The Urban Coalition's mission is to increase the capacity of low-income, African American, American Indian, Asian/Pacific and Chicano/Latino communities to address political, economic and social concerns that are identified, and to promote the public dialogue through research-based advocacy and policy work."*

Founded in 1968, the Urban Coalition is a non-profit organization that pursues its mission through research, public policy, technical assistance, advocacy and capacity-building. In recent years, the Coalition has focused on education, employment, food and hunger, health, and issues of race, although it may become involved in other issues as invited, or as they arise. In the spirit of true collaboration, the Coalition is involved in multiple collaborative efforts with other organizations and key stakeholders in our community.

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# Bitter Sugar:

## Migrant Farmworker Nutrition and Access to Service in Minnesota

*A Report by the Minnesota Food Education and Resource Center*

*A program of the Urban Coalition*

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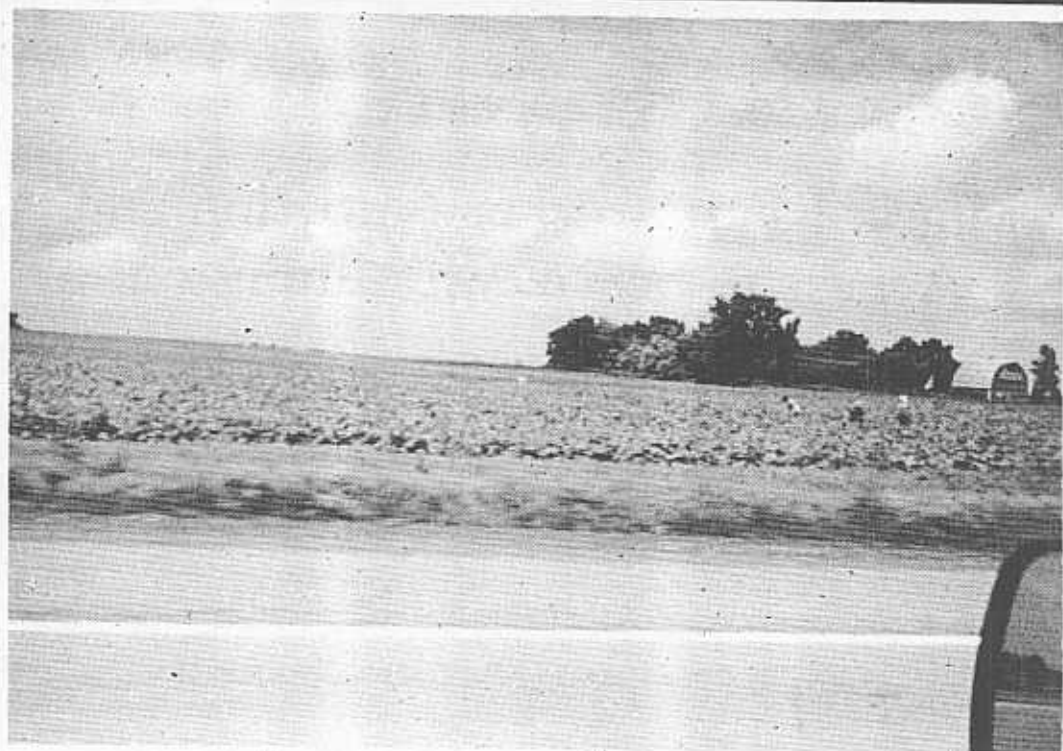
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Migrant laborers near  
Clara City, Minnesota.



An example of migrant housing  
in Minnesota.





# Executive Summary

## Background

- Each year an estimated 15,000 to 18,000 migrant agricultural workers travel to Minnesota to work in sugar beet fields, canning companies, vegetable farms, forestry, and to perform other agricultural tasks. For these workers, migration is a strategy for securing income, providing for their families, and working toward a better future.
- National studies show that migrant farmworkers are at high risk for the development of nutrition related illness. This risk is due to the simultaneous presence of several factors including poverty, cultural practices, and a migratory lifestyle.
- Migrant farmworkers contribute to the economy of the Minnesota communities in which they live and work. Agriculture contributes \$8.9 billion annually in earned gross income to the Minnesota economy, and the sugar beet industry alone is worth over \$1.6 billion dollars.
- Although most farmworker families live in poverty, only 25% of those families in poverty use public assistance services.

## Purpose of the Study:

- To provide an accurate description of the population of migrant farmworkers, primarily of Chicano/Latino descent, that come to Minnesota.
- To accurately document access to food and nutrition assistance and related public and private assistance resources.
- To work with migrant farmworkers and the agencies that serve that community to develop strategies and resources for removing barriers to access.

## Access to Services:

- Long work hours, low wages, inconsistent work opportunities, inadequate cooking and food storage facilities, and linguistic and cultural barriers make it difficult for many migrant farmworkers to meet their nutritional needs.
- Migrant workers use informal networks and family support systems to meet their nutritional needs. When these are not adequate, some migrants utilize migrant service agencies or public assistance programs.
- Migrants face numerous barriers in accessing these programs. Many migrants are unaware of programs that exist or how to establish eligibility. Some individuals lack transportation and/or must wait until family members are available to drive them to appointments or provide translation before they can access services. Others become discouraged by inefficient referral systems and lengthy application forms, which result in time lost from work. The lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate services and differences in service provision models used in Minnesota and migrants' home states can also lead to ineffective service provision. In addition, migrant workers are often the objects of resentment, discrimination and racism when they apply for services.



## Recommendations

One of the best ways to improve the nutritional and health status of migrant farmworkers is to provide steady work and much higher wages. Under recent economic conditions, however, wages have been stagnant or falling. Given these economic realities, public and private assistance programs are absolutely essential to meet the nutritional and health needs of migrant workers and their families. The following recommendations are designed to make this system as effective and efficient as possible.

### Federal:

- Medicaid certification should be easily and readily transferable between states, as WIC certification is. Currently, applicants must wait several months to find out if they are eligible in Minnesota, even if they have qualified for Medicaid in their home state. Eligibility for Medicaid varies between states, and Minnesota's eligibility standards are more generous than those of most migrant home base states. Minnesota eligibility should be automatically extended to those with current eligibility in their home state.
- Food stamps should not be block granted. However, if such is the case, there should be considerations for migrant farmworkers such as the exclusion of the value of a homestead owned in Texas and exclusion of the value of the first vehicle if it is used for self employment (including contract sugar beet work) when benefits are calculated.
- Legal Aid programs, including Migrant Legal Services, should be allowed to continue client education components, lobbying on behalf of their clientele, filing of class action law suits, and the representation of individuals regardless of their documentation status. Pending legislation attempts to limit these activities, severely curtailing the ability of Legal Aid programs to represent those most in need.
- There should be recognition and support for ongoing health services targeted toward migrant communities that are preventive and cross state lines. Forums and funding that allow for the development of interstate referral networks and resource sharing, especially among migrant clinics and local health centers, should be provided.
- Homelessness and migratory status should be considered high-priority nutrition risks for purposes of WIC certification.
- The definition of migrant worker should be standardized by all agencies serving migrants to assure that those most in need have priority in receiving services.

## State:

- The state should encourage the advancement of former migrants to work in clinical settings and the integration of farmworkers into health professions, particularly nutrition education, by offering incentives for training programs that include migrant farmworkers. The development of peer-education on nutrition within the community should be encouraged.
- Extension programs and the Expanded Food and Nutrition program should work with Migrant Health Services to develop a resource library of background information on migrant nutritional issues and culturally appropriate education tools for use by direct service staff.
- The Minnesota Extension Service, in collaboration with Migrant Health Services, WIC and certified dietitians, should establish a committee to review nutritional materials for cultural appropriateness and accurate translation.
- The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA), in conjunction with the Spanish Speaking Affairs Council, Department of Human Services (DHS), and migrant service agencies should establish a work group on migrant housing and develop a statewide strategy for increasing migrant housing.
- Nutrition education should build on positive aspects of the traditional migrant diet and incorporate strategies for making food choices that are both economically and nutritionally sound.

## Department of Human Services:

- Funds should be set aside for use by migrant agencies to analyze and publish baseline health and socio-economic data regarding the migrant farmworker community in Minnesota.
- Any outreach effort made by DHS should designate resources for use in expanding outreach to migrant farmworkers.
- Emergency assistance should be provided to migrant farmworkers on a one-time-per migrant season or calendar-year basis rather than one-time per twelve months as is done currently. This would better fit the needs of the migrant population. For example, a migrant family that needed emergency assistance in August of this year because of a poor harvest would still be eligible if they need it for help with housing in May of next year. Migrants would not receive emergency assistance more frequently than other populations, but would receive it on a time line more appropriate for their needs.
- The Department of Human Services' annual training for counties serving migrant farmworkers should include: 1) informational presentations by representatives of the major migrant service agencies to increase appropriate referrals; and 2) training by migrant advocates on ways to more effectively serve the migrant population.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Department of Human Services should revise the combined application form used to apply for state and county services to include a question asking specifically if an applicant is without food or shelter rather than asking if they have "some other emergency," as it currently reads. The present language is unclear and unlikely to be understood by migrant workers with limited English skills.
- The Department of Human Services should issue a protocol of standards on processing migrants both generally and for "emergencies." It should revise and re-issue Informational and Instructional Bulletins 87-8A and 87-8B.
- The Department of Human Services should establish standards for determining when interpreters/translators should be used and the minimum qualifications they must possess. As part of these standards, each person applying for county services should be asked if he/she is in need of an interpreter, even if accompanied by an individual who appears to be capable of interpreting. Compliance with these standards should be part of individual staff and county evaluations. These standards should eliminate the use of minor children or individuals with very limited English as interpreters and allow for interpretation on the same day it is requested. Written materials should be reviewed by at least two individuals, one with knowledge of the migrant community and the other with certified Spanish skills, for consistency and accuracy of translation.
- The Minnesota Department of Human Services should provide all commonly used county human service forms and instruction booklets in Spanish and revise the Spanish versions at the same time the English originals are revised.
- Minnesota counties with migrant populations should have readily available Spanish forms and application instructions from the Department of Human Services in sufficient supply to meet demand. Counties should be evaluated on the extent to which they supply these materials to their applicants.
- The Minnesota Department of Human Services, in conjunction with Migrant Legal Services, should develop an outline of participant rights and responsibilities in Spanish and English for distribution to migrant workers applying for county services.

## Non-Governmental Organizations:

- Food Banks should make culturally appropriate food staples available to food shelves in all parts of Minnesota. The list on page 33 identifies these items.
- The Minnesota Food Shelf Association, in collaboration with Migrant Education programs, should compile a statewide list of culturally appropriate commercial food suppliers for use by food shelves.
- The Minnesota Food Shelf Association should undertake the education of local food shelves and food shelf boards in areas where migrants are/should be served.
- All food shelves that serve the migrant community should provide culturally appropriate staples as part of their food packages. Efforts should be made to provide foods that are both difficult to acquire and currently lacking in typical migrant diets such as cheese and fresh vegetables.



- Food shelves should not ask for social security numbers as a tracking mechanism, and should inform clients verbally and post written signs noting that social security numbers are not a requirement for services. The combination of full names and birth dates should be used instead.
- Migrant workers or recently settled migrant workers identified with the help of migrant service agencies should be actively involved in the planning and evaluation of nutrition services provided to the migrant community. These services should include an outreach strategy conducted in Spanish designed specifically to provide migrant workers with information about available food resources.

## Migrant Service Agencies:

- Migrant Health Services, Inc. should identify a specific model for nutritional outreach to the migrant community and share it with other agencies providing nutrition services.
- All agencies should meet in the off-season to inform each other of changes in service guidelines and plan coordination of services, including nutrition-related referrals.
- All agencies should meet annually on the local level with other community services including food shelves, community action programs and county human services representatives to share information about their programs and establish a referral system.
- Migrant Education Nutritionists and Migrant Health Services, Inc. should establish agreements with local nutrition providers (county WIC staff, public health nursing services and extension service staff) to raise awareness of available services and avoid duplication of services.
- Funds should be set aside to hire seasonal advocates to educate migrants about programs and assist them in obtaining services.

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# Introduction

Each year an estimated three million migrant farmworkers travel from their home states and Puerto Rico to participate in agricultural labor throughout the United States. Service providers estimate that 15,000 to 18,000 of these workers come to Minnesota to work in sugar beet fields, canning companies, vegetable farms, forestry and to perform other agricultural tasks. When dependent (non-working) family members are accounted for, the estimate of individuals that come to Minnesota each year reaches 53,000.<sup>1</sup>

The majority of migrant farmworkers that come to Minnesota are U.S. citizens or permanent residents from Texas, and are Chicanos/Latinos of Mexican descent. For some, the journey to Minnesota is a familiar trip to an already established work site where housing is guaranteed. But for those who come for the first time or without secured work, the struggle to finding housing, employment and resources to meet basic needs is a major part of their experience in Minnesota. Despite the fact that migrants do very labor intensive work for long hours, low wages, inconsistent work, and linguistic and cultural barriers make it difficult for many to meet their basic nutritional needs.

## Purpose:

The Minnesota Food Education and Resource Center (MNFERC), a program of the Urban Coalition, learned of barriers migrant farmworkers face in accessing food and nutrition services during its 1994 study of the Food Stamp Program. The Chicano/Latino community, and social service and anti-hunger organizations voiced concerns that migrant farmworkers experience barriers to accessing private and public food and nutrition assistance programs. Anecdotal information was available regarding barriers migrants face when accessing services, but documentation of specific problem areas was not. A need was identified to conduct further research in this area and to provide a more comprehensive picture of the migrant community in Minnesota. A research design was established by representatives of migrant service agencies, the Spanish Speaking Affairs Council, the Minnesota Food Shelf Association, and MNFERC.

In 1995 MNFERC received Community Food and Nutrition Program (CFNP) funding to study the food and nutritional needs of migrant farmworkers. The purpose of the study is three-fold:

1. To provide an accurate description of the population of migrant farmworkers, primarily of Chicano/Latino descent;
2. To accurately document access barriers to food and nutrition assistance and other private and public assistance resources;
3. To work with the migrant farmworker community and agencies that serve it to develop workable strategies and resources to overcome those barriers.



<sup>1</sup>Migrant Legal Assistance Project, Migrant Enumeration Project, (Washington: 1993).

# INTRODUCTION

## Migrant Nutrition and Nutrition Programs:

National studies show that the migrant community experiences a number of nutritional problems. The Georgetown University Child Development Center found in 1987 that migrant and seasonal farmworkers are at high risk for the development of nutrition-related illnesses. This risk is due to the simultaneous presence of several factors such as poverty, cultural practices, and migratory lifestyle.<sup>2</sup> These findings are reflected in the nutrition-related problems migrants in the Urban Coalition study identify: lack of financial resources at the beginning of the season and during seasonal downturns; limited access to nutrition resources; poor food preparation and storage facilities; and unavailability of culturally appropriate foods and resources.

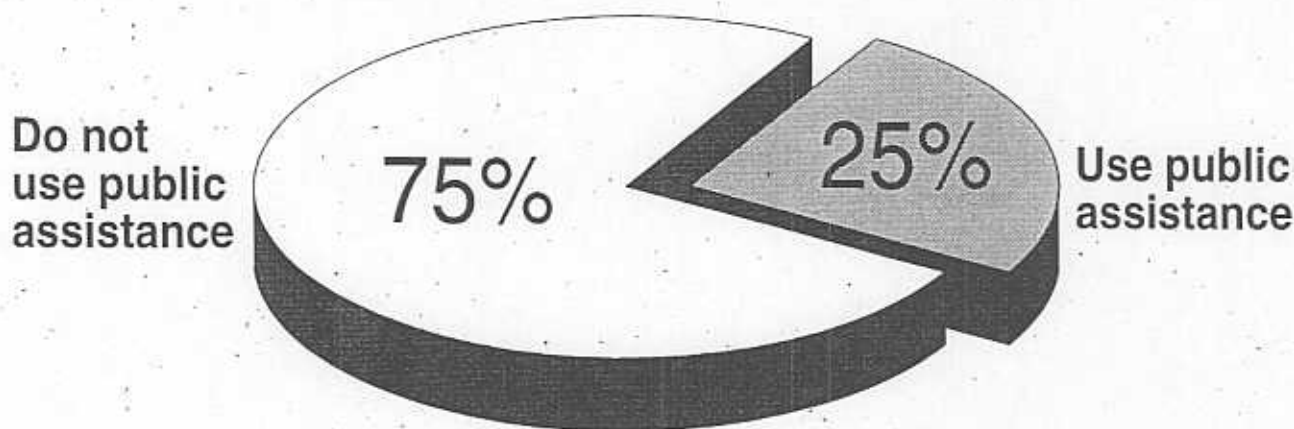
National studies have shown that migrant farmworkers have a high incidence of cardiovascular illness, obesity, diabetes, anemia, poor dental health, gastrointestinal illness and infections. While the traditional Mexican diet is relatively healthy, it also contains a high level of fat and low level of vegetable consumption. The nature of migrant labor itself limits the ability of migrant workers to eat well. In addition, migrant farmworkers often lack basic information about nutrition that would allow them to improve their diets.

A typical annual income for a migrant family that travels to Minnesota is between \$8,000 and \$10,000, indicating that most migrant families would qualify for public assistance programs. However, many migrant farmworkers rely exclusively on informal networks of family and friends to meet their food needs. Nationally, 80% of all migrant farmworker households (and 75% of migrant households living in poverty) do not use public assistance services including food stamps, WIC, AFDC, General Assistance, and public or subsidized housing.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Georgetown University Child Development Center, *Nutrition and Migrant Health: Trends in Nutrition Services at Migrant Health Centers*, (Washington: 1987) 1.

<sup>3</sup> Samardick, Ruth, *The National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS): Recent Findings Relevant to Policy Development and Program Planning and Evaluation*, Presentation to the Interagency Committee on Migrants, (Washington: 1995) 11,13.

## Migrant Farmworker Households Living in Poverty



The public assistance services covered are:  
Food Stamps, WIC, AFDC, General Assistance, and public or subsidized housing.  
Source: Samardick. U.S. Department of Labor, National Agricultural Works Survey, 1995.



There are two main types of nutrition programs that are utilized by the remaining migrant households: those provided by agencies that specifically target the migrant population and those provided to the general community, including migrants. The former, such as Migrant Health and Education and job programs, are perceived to provide more culturally appropriate services and to take into account the special needs of farmworkers. The latter are typically federal or state programs such as Food Stamps and WIC, or local food shelves that serve low-income individuals and for which migrant workers also qualify.

## INTRODUCTION

### *The Study Process:*

The study process was designed based on discussions between the Urban Coalition, Midwest Farmworker Employment and Training, the Spanish Speaking Affairs Council, and the Minnesota Food Shelf Association. Initially, a literature review was conducted to gather information about the history of migrant labor in Minnesota, nutrition-related programs accessed by migrant farmworkers, and studies that have been done on migrant farmworker nutrition. Meetings were held with directors of migrant service agencies to determine the best way to proceed. Visits were then made to major migrant centers throughout the state.

During these visits, interviews were held with representatives of migrant service agencies, county human service offices, food shelves, and other services or individuals working with migrants in the community. Migrant families were identified with the assistance of migrant agency staff and interviewed at a location convenient to them, most often migrant service centers, their homes, or places of employment.

The field research was carried out between June and September of 1995, the months in which migrant labor is in greatest demand. Geographically, efforts were focused on areas with large concentrations of migrant farmworkers—the Red River Valley and central and southern Minnesota. An effort was made to include areas that produce the various crops requiring migrant labor, small and large communities, communities with a large number of resources for migrant farmworkers, as well as those with very few. A brief trip was also made to Hidalgo County in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas to visit migrant families in the context of their home state and to compare service delivery processes used in Texas to those used in Minnesota, especially for federal programs that have similar standards in all states. Over 65 migrant families and 135 service providers and migrant advocates were interviewed as part of the study.

No formal survey instrument was used since a statistical survey was not within the scope of the project. However, an interview guide was used as a starting point for discussions with migrant farmworkers and service providers to provide consistency in topics covered. The intent of the interviews was to understand issues of food and nutrition in their local contexts and to better describe the migrant community in Minnesota.



## INTRODUCTION

### *Definition of Migrant Farmworkers:*

For purposes of this report we have focused on individuals who have traveled to Minnesota from another state or country within the last year and participated in agricultural work, including field and canning factory work. We chose to study this population because of their active migrant status and because of the way the seasonal nature of their farm work affects access to services. Other groups, including poultry processors, may face similar obstacles, but were not specifically studied because the work they do is not necessarily considered seasonal. However, the findings in this report may apply to them in so far as they use their work as seasonal employment and follow the migrant stream.

The phrase "migrant worker" means many things to many people. Someone who follows the migrant stream to a northern state and works in a computer parts factory, or someone who has long since left the migrant stream may consider him or herself a migrant, although agency definitions of migrant workers would not. Some programs serve individuals who have left the migrant stream as long as 24 months in the past.

# The Migrant Community in Minnesota

"There is more known about migrating birds than about migrant farmworkers."

*Migrant Legal Services*

Migrant farmworkers have been part of Minnesota's agricultural community since the early 1800s, yet anyone who attempts to gather information about migrant farmworkers is immediately struck by the lack of information about who makes up this community, the contributions they make to the local economy, and/or even the work they do. Migrant workers are not counted in Minnesota census data, and most studies exclude them either intentionally or by choosing study designs (phone surveys, for example) that cause them to be overlooked. The national information that does exist cannot always be extrapolated to represent local needs or realities. Some county human service agencies may keep track of the number of migrant households they serve, but this information has not been available on a state level.

Migrant service agencies have information about the migrants they work with, but may not have the resources or incentive to provide it in a format usable by others. Despite these limitations, this section will attempt to synthesize information from these various sources to describe the history and reality of the migrant community in Minnesota.

## History:

During the late 1800s, agricultural practices throughout the United States underwent a series of changes leading to increased industrialization. Efforts were made to use research-oriented techniques and scientific methods to run farms, and the sugar beet industry was at the forefront of this new trend. In Minnesota, the Minnesota River Valley, South Eastern Minnesota and the Red River Valley were the areas most affected. Industrialists had the capital to build factories, but not the land on which to grow sugar beets. Landowners were willing to grow sugar beets in place of other crops, because it was financially lucrative, but they refused to do field work that involved stooping, kneeling or crawling. This led to the hiring of women and children, often foreign born Eastern Europeans or their children, and single males who migrated from other parts of the region to do the work.

Early migrants suffered inhumane living conditions (often living in tents or old shacks without basic sanitation) and enjoyed little legal or social protection. As large land owners subdivided and sold their land, the sugar beet industry would often facilitate training, advice, and low-interest loans to former migrants. This assistance, coupled with the availability of land, allowed the migrant/immigrants to become landowners by renting and then purchasing the land that they worked under contract. Many of today's Minnesota farmers own land that their ancestors earned in this way.

The neglect of farmworkers in later years is rooted in the assumption that farmworkers would soon own their own farms and that hand labor would soon be replaced by machines. There has been denial of the existence of a permanent class of farmworkers,<sup>4</sup> yet new farm owners continue to use migrant labor to produce their crops.

## THE MIGRANT COMMUNITY IN MINNESOTA

"In the [Red River] Valley, hand labor has been an important part of the industry for 50 years"

*Sugar Beet Grower's Association Representative*

## THE MIGRANT COMMUNITY IN MINNESOTA

With the growth of agricultural industry, the demand for laborers also grew. An immigration clause in the Immigration Act of 1917 allowed Mexican citizens to enter the U.S. under contract to work exempt from the literacy test and head tax required of permanent immigrants. Enganchistas (recruiters) were sent to the border and to Mexico to recruit workers for agricultural labor. By 1927 Mexicans made up 75-90% of the total labor force in sugar beet regions, and the U.S. Department of Labor estimated that some 15,000 workers were in the midwestern region.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1930s there was a reorganization of the sugar beet industry, and the American Beet Sugar Company became American Crystal Sugar in 1935. With this change came the organization of growers to increase political clout and the expansion of the industry. The commercialized production of fruit in the Great Lakes region, especially Michigan, further increased the demand for migrant labor, as did the expansion of cotton and vegetable industries. By the 1940s an estimated 60,000 migrant workers traveled annually to the Great Lakes region, many contracted directly by American Crystal Sugar.<sup>2</sup>

During this time, the coal industry, as well as the onion, spinach and pecan businesses, declined in Texas raising the pressure for people to migrate,<sup>3</sup> while the lower cost of living and housing in Texas encouraged people to keep it as their permanent home. The state of Texas made efforts to stop emigration by collecting taxes on employment agencies that might place workers in migrant jobs. Exempt from these taxes, however, were private agents who worked for a single employer. They often came to South-Central Texas and the Rio Grande Valley, recruited workers and transported them to migrant labor sites, often in the back of trucks intended for produce transport.<sup>4</sup> Several efforts were made in the 1940s and early 1950s to replace the Texan labor force with other groups such as Braceros (Mexicans given special work status) and Puerto Ricans, but the pool of ever-available Texans willing to work under adverse conditions and for lower pay remained the primary labor force.

Once in Northern states, many workers would suffer long periods of unemployment during the summer months because growers often over-hired workers to avoid a labor shortage and higher wages. New Deal legislation and labor organization of field workers became a factor in the industry. The 1937 Sugar Act, for example, was designed to assist growers and field workers and prohibited the payment of government benefit payments to growers who hired children under age 13. Wage hearings were also held to determine a fair wage for farm work.<sup>5</sup>

In the 1940s advances in the food industry created a concentration of vegetable canneries in the hands of companies such as Green Giant and Libby, replacing locally owned canneries.<sup>6</sup> The trend toward industrialization in agriculture included the use of pesticides and herbicides, which increased crop yields. Segmented seeds introduced in the early 1940s reduced the need for crop thinning, and mechanized harvesting limited the workers needed at the end of the season. Nonetheless, the increase of production offset the impact of mechanization, and the demand for field workers remained relatively steady into the 1950s.

The labor supply was increased with the mechanization of cotton picking which reduced demand for labor in Texas. Production changes then began to alter the work cycle for farmworkers. With the decline in need for sugar beet labor, migrants began to travel over a greater distance and work in different crop areas, with a notable increase in canning factory work. In addition to the travel between northern and southern Minnesota, many workers also began traveling to other states, including Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana.

The work force throughout the 1960s became increasingly Chicano (U.S. born individuals of Mexican descent), even as demand for workers continued to decrease. In the 1970s there was an expansion of apple, mushroom and asparagus crops in the Midwest, and the number of farmworkers stabilized nationally to approximately 2.5 million annually. This trend was

<sup>1</sup> Martin, Philip L. and Martin, David A., *The Endless Quest: Helping America's Farm Workers*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995) 14.

<sup>2</sup> Valdes, Dennis Nodan, *Al Norte: Agricultural Workers in the Great Lakes Region, 1917-1970*, (Austin: UT, 1991) 11.

<sup>3</sup> Valdes 51.

<sup>4</sup> Valdes 51.

<sup>5</sup> Valdes 54.

<sup>6</sup> Valdes 37.

<sup>7</sup> Valdes 68.



reinforced with the implementation of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, which gave legal immigration status to many farmworkers of Mexican origin already working in the United States. Today 60% of all farmworkers are migrants, and 90% of migrants are Chicano/Latino.<sup>11</sup>

## The Minnesota Migrant Community Today:

Estimates of the number of migrant workers that come to Minnesota range between 15,000 (based on service provider estimates of migrant workers) and 54,000 (based on estimates derived from labor demand, and including non-working dependents). The majority are Chicanos/Latinos and come from the Rio Grande Valley in Texas.

In parts of Texas, over 50% of children migrate to Northern states with their families. For students migrating from the school district that covers the Rio Grande Valley, 26,316 students migrated to other states in the 1994-1995 school year. Minnesota was the second most common destination after Michigan, receiving 3,388 students from this one district alone.<sup>12</sup>

According to the Minnesota State Demographer's office, 62.5% of all Chicanos/Latinos who migrate in Minnesota come from Texas, California, or a foreign country. While this percentage refers to individuals who settle permanently in Minnesota, it is relevant because many Chicanos/Latinos who settle in Minnesota are former migrant workers.

Many migrant families work in agricultural labor in other parts of the country before or after coming to Minnesota. Most migrant workers are U.S. citizens or have legal documentation to reside and work in the United States. It is estimated that 84% of farmworkers in the United States have authorization to work in the United States of America.<sup>13</sup> The majority of those without work authorization travel with family members or friends who do have documented status.

Many people think of a young, single man as the typical farmworker, and indeed some migrant workers do travel alone, especially if they have a job that provides housing for single people only. However, many farmworkers travel with their nuclear and extended families, depending on their personal situation. Some choose to leave small children with relatives in their home state, but others bring children along in order to maintain family unity. Often times a single adult friend or relative will travel with a nuclear family.

## THE MIGRANT COMMUNITY IN MINNESOTA

*"More individuals are leaving their family in Texas because of the shortage of housing, and the cost of maintaining a family in Minnesota."*

Wilken County  
Human Services  
Supervisor

<sup>11</sup> Martin 16.

<sup>12</sup> Texas Migrant Interstate Program, *Migrant Students Region One Count By State: 1994-1995*, (Pharr: 1995).

<sup>13</sup> Samardick 39.

## THE MIGRANT COMMUNITY IN MINNESOTA

### Migrant Farmwork:

*"There are people that come in the guise of migrants...[but] the true migrant comes to work."*

*Migrant Advocate, Former Migrant*

Migrant farm work is never a sure prospect. Migrants come with the hope of making enough money to get through the summer and to save for the winter months when work is scarce in their home states. However, the availability of work depends on the weather, the choices individual farmers make on whether to use farmworkers or machines for certain tasks, the effectiveness of pesticides, and the availability of housing close to the work site. The floods of 1993 are a recent reminder of how quickly a promising season can turn into an economic disaster for both farmers and farmworkers.

Even when work is available, the amount earned per unit of work can vary greatly. The rates for migrant labor have changed little in the past five to ten years. For example, the standard pay rate for thinning beets is \$33/acre and \$22/acre for hoeing. Rates can reach \$50/acre if the field is very wet or labor is scarce. The time needed to complete an acre can vary depending on how many plants need to be thinned out, how thick the weeds are, or how damp the field is. The time necessary for other field labor, such as detasseling corn, cleaning fields, or weeding beans also depends on crop and weather conditions. By law, all workers must earn at least the equivalent of minimum wage even if they are hired by contract, but the number of hours needed to complete an acre can often result in net hourly earnings of less than minimum wage when pay is by the acre.

Payroll audits carried out by the Minnesota Department of Labor indicate that most migrant wages calculate to roughly minimum wage and are often less than minimum wage.<sup>14</sup> Migrant workers are now being encouraged by the Department of Labor and Migrant Legal Services to keep track of all the hours they work in a field and to make sure they are earning the equivalent of minimum wage. In recent years some farmers have begun paying an hourly wage (at or slightly above minimum wage) instead of contracting by acre. Migrants who work in canning factories or harvesting produce can expect to earn between \$4.25 and \$7 an hour, with wages around \$5 being most common. Workers count on overtime pay to make the work worth the effort involved.

One measure of the job insecurity of migrant farm work is the number of people who seek out the assistance of Minnesota Job Service offices in finding agricultural employment. Individuals seeking assistance may have come without secured work, or the work they were counting on may have lasted less time than expected.

From January to June of 1995, 3,956 migrant farmworkers and 68 migrant food processing workers went to Job Service offices throughout the state looking for assistance. The majority went to offices in the Red River Valley where work related to sugar beets is the migrant mainstay.<sup>15</sup> Other offices with significant migrant activity are in areas with significant food processing work.<sup>16</sup> A number of county human service workers report an increase during the past several years in the number of people who come to Minnesota without secured work. These individuals face many obstacles, especially where housing is very limited and work opportunities few. The fact that they come so far in hope of finding work is testimony to the depressed labor market in southern states and the tremendous effort people will make to secure a better future for themselves and their families.

*"More and more  
people come up  
looking for work."*

*Migrant Legal  
Services Staff*

<sup>14</sup> Rosalyn Wade, phone interview, October 26, 1995.

<sup>15</sup> The Crookston office, for example, saw 1,017; East Grand Forks-770; Willmar-1,130; and Fergus Falls-186 migrant farmworkers and food processing workers. U.S. D.D.L. Employment and Training Administration Migrant Indicators of Compliance as of 6/95.

<sup>16</sup> Owatonna (237 migrant applications), Albert Lea (59), Fairmont (29) and Hutchinson (27). U.S. D.D.L. Employment and Training Administration Migrant Indicators of Compliance as of 6/95.

## The Migrant Season:

*"It is hard to find permanent residents who are able to work a twelve hour shift, seven days a week, especially if they have a full-time job."*

*Southern Minnesota Sugar Beet Crop Administrator*

Where people migrate depends on both actual and perceived job and housing opportunities, as well as the presence of family members or friends who can help with the transition to Minnesota. In greater Minnesota, the areas with the largest concentrations of migrant farm work also contain cities with the largest population of Chicanos/Latinos (Willmar, Albert Lea and Moorhead). The map on page 10 shows the areas where major crops requiring migrant labor are grown. The chart below shows an approximation of each crop's season.

During the past several years, the Red River Valley Sugar Beet Association has sent a letter to Texas employment commissions advising them that work opportunities are limited for people who do not already have an agreement with a sugar beet grower. The amount of migrant labor needed per acre of sugar beets has decreased in recent years due to mechanization and increased use of herbicides and pesticides. Because of an 8-10% annual expansion in total sugar beet acreage, however, the demand for migrant labor has remained relatively steady.

The migrant season varies according to the crop being produced and the weather conditions of a given year. Sugar beet hoeing and thinning and vegetable canning are the two largest migrant crops in Minnesota. Sugar beet season usually lasts from June to mid-July (for thinning and weeding), with a smaller "second wave" of migrants arriving in the Red River Valley in late August and September for sugar beet and potato harvesting. Vegetable canning dominates the work in Southern Minnesota and has three different crops that guide the season: asparagus (May), peas (June) and corn (late July-late September), with corn canning (or "pack") requiring the largest labor force.

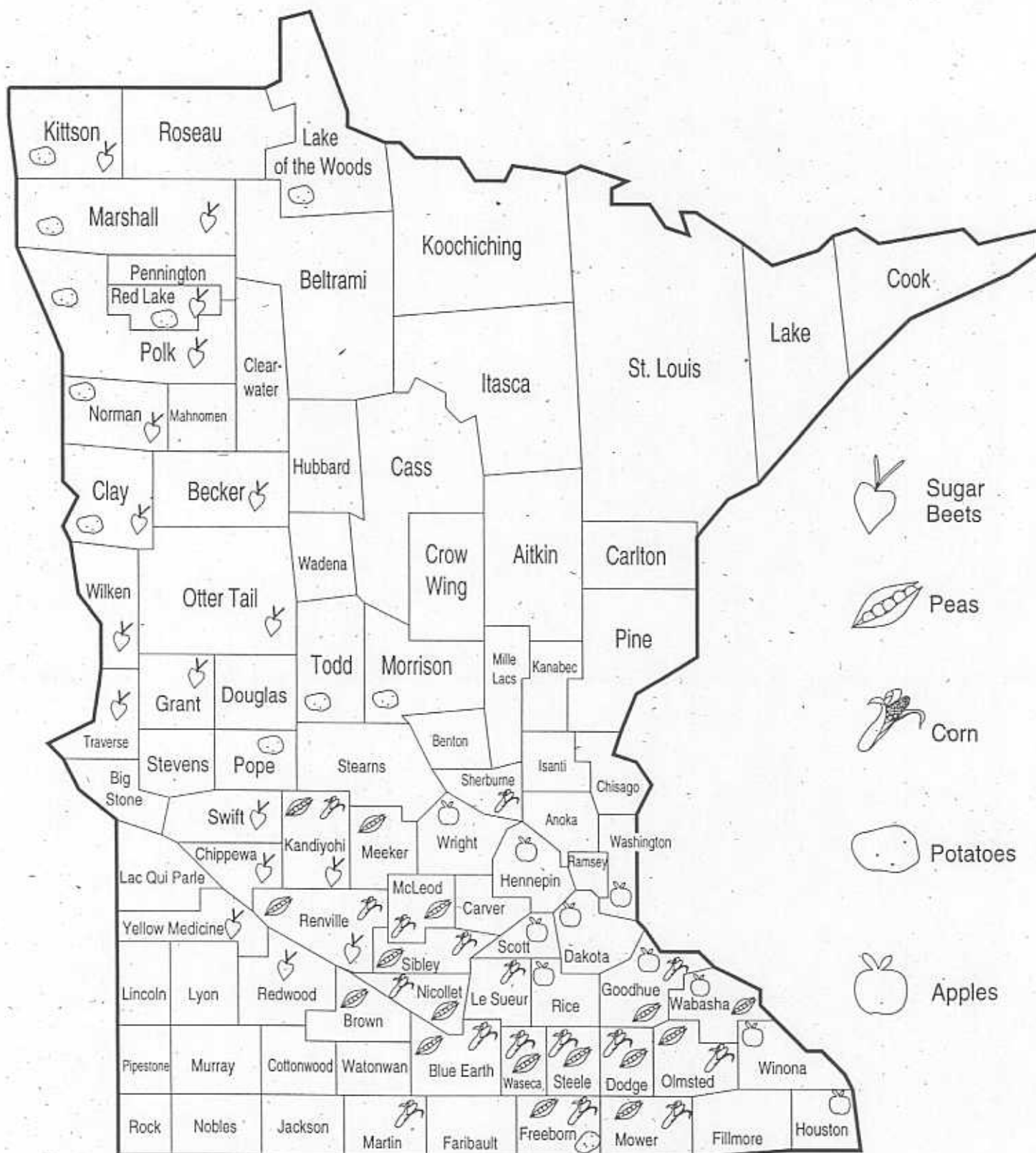
Other field work includes preparing fields before planting and work in soybean and potato fields. Many migrants also work in forestry, nurseries or vegetable truck farms. The work in these crops stretches from field preparation, which can begin in early spring, to harvesting in late fall—a very long migrant season. Many families work on early crops, such as sugar beets, and then travel to another part of Minnesota to harvest apples or potatoes. Families will stay until the work required for their crop ends, although those with children try to return to their home base states before school begins (mid-August in Texas).

### Major Minnesota Migrant Crops and Time-Lines

CROP.....	SEASON
Asparagus.....	May
Peas.....	June
Sugar Beets .....	June-late July or early August
Corn.....	Late July-late September
Apples.....	Late August-late October
Potatoes .....	September-late October

THE MIGRANT  
COMMUNITY IN  
MINNESOTA

# CROPS GROWN IN MINNESOTA BY COUNTY



Source: Minnesota Agricultural Statistics Service, Average Yield 1993-1994



While the majority of migrants arrive in May or June, an increasing number of families have begun arriving earlier in order to secure housing and work, some as early as February or March. Migrants who work with the same grower year after year, who have secured housing, or who are contracted ahead of time by a company often contact their employers to determine when they should come to Minnesota. The farmer or company asks them to come based on their knowledge of crop development that year and weather conditions. In order to avoid being without workers, the employer may estimate on the early side, resulting in several days or even weeks of unemployment for migrants when they arrive in Minnesota.

Many migrant sugar beet laborers begin work at 4:00 or 5:00 a.m. and take a midday break to avoid the hottest part of the day. They then return to the field in the evening for a total of 12 or more hours of work per day. The work requires constant stooping and exposure to sun and rain. Some farmworkers contract directly with growers for the work they will do, while others are hired by contractors known as "crew leaders" (who act as brokers between workers and farmers) or by large companies such as Seneca or Green Giant.

Most of the canning factories begin a "pack" or canning session with part-time hours and increase to two 10 or 12 hour shifts as the crop begins to come in full force. In many factories migrant workers rotate day and night shifts every two weeks. The company may employ migrants before and after the packs in field work related to the crop. In some cases the camp manager will arrange outside work for the migrant workers when there is a lull in the factory work. Because crops and weather are unpredictable, migrant workers often experience periods of unemployment or underemployment during a season.

Increasingly, members of migrant families may work in non-traditional migrant labor such as poultry processing or construction or take non-seasonal work on a temporary basis. Some Minnesota towns such as Willmar, Albert Lea, and Moorhead now have fairly large permanent Chicano/Latino communities. Migrant families fortunate enough to have a relative who is a permanent Minnesota resident may stay with him/her when first arriving in Minnesota, and may extend their stay beyond the traditional migrant season or work in non-traditional labor during the season. Having used the agricultural labor they are familiar with as a launching pad into the Minnesota economy, some of these individuals stay in Minnesota because of the strong job market.

## THE MIGRANT COMMUNITY IN MINNESOTA

## THE MIGRANT COMMUNITY IN MINNESOTA

*"The sugar beet farmers are seen as pillars of our community, but the contributions of migrants are not recognized."*

Migrant Education  
Program Director,  
Crookston, MN

### Economic Impact:

*"For Southern Minnesota, having Chicano/Latino families is the best thing that could happen. Southern Minnesota is completely dependent on migrant families."*

*Southeastern Initiative Fund Staff*

Because migrant labor is not measured directly, it is hard to put a price tag on its contribution to Minnesota's economy. Traditionally, migrant labor has been seen as an input or cost without recognition of the human component and contribution involved. The work done by migrant farmworkers requires a large work force that can be mobilized quickly and work long hours for a short period of time. Minnesota's resident labor force is not large or mobile enough to supply all of the labor needed. Without migrant labor, sweet corn would not be packed and put on grocery shelves and sugar beets would be strangled by weeds while still in the fields. The low cost of migrant labor is passed on to consumers, grocery stores and agribusiness and is reflected in lower food prices.

Few studies have been done on the economic impact of migrant labor on local or state economies. One recent study examined the economic impact of migrant labor on Virginia's Eastern Shore in terms of direct (changed output, employee compensation and value added), indirect (changed input purchases), and induced effects (changes in expenditures by households). The investigators found that the elimination of migrant labor from the Eastern Shore would result in a 3.2% decrease in regional economic output.<sup>17</sup> This is based on the loss of migrant and crew leader expenditures, the loss of expenditures made by migrant service organizations, reduced production by agricultural sectors that employ migrants, the loss of expenditures by employers on migrant housing, and the potential gain in production of crops not requiring migrant labor. The study only examined impact on the local economy, and thus excluded wage payments to and employment of migrants that were not spent locally.

This study found that profitability of local agriculture depends critically on migrant labor. If migrants are no longer used, the agricultural economy suffers and full-time agricultural employment and employment with migrant service agencies is lost. It found that vegetable and fruit production (which requires migrant labor) is more profitable for farmers than grain production (which does not require migrant labor). Furthermore, the presence of migrants leads to significant infusion of state and federal dollars.<sup>18</sup> While agricultural conditions vary between Virginia and Minnesota, it is likely that a similar analysis of the Minnesota agricultural economy would further demonstrate the positive economic role and contribution of migrant workers.

The importance of migrant work in Minnesota is reflected in the value of the sugar beet industry, which in the Red River Valley alone is estimated to be worth \$1.5 billion, generating between 2,000 and 3,000 direct jobs and 25,000 secondary jobs in addition to the 5,000 or 6,000 farmworkers employed. The Southern Minnesota Sugar Beet Cooperative, whose members produce between 100,000 to 110,000 acres of sugar beets, estimates that their regional industry adds \$150 million directly to the Minnesota economy. The U.S. exports fruits and vegetables picked by migrant farmworkers. U.S. Farm exports in 1990 included \$2 billion in fresh and processed vegetables and \$3 billion in fruits and nuts.

<sup>17</sup> Sils, Alwang, Driscoll, *Migrant Farm Workers on Virginia's Eastern Shore*, *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics*, Volume 25, Number 1, July 1994, 210.

<sup>18</sup> Sils, Alwang and Driscoll, 219.

The economic impact of migrant labor goes beyond the value of each individual's work. Migrant workers have Minnesota state taxes deducted from their pay, yet few migrants acknowledge that they file for Minnesota income tax refunds. The funds they pay into the system become part of the State's economic resources. Minnesota's economy benefits from wages paid to migrants because migrant workers purchase food, clothing, and automobiles in Minnesota. Local apartment, hotel and home owners make money from the rent migrant workers pay. Migrants who receive public benefits such as Food Stamps and WIC vouchers redeem them in local stores. Chippewa County estimates that it gets back 80% of the value that it issues through food stamps, and Kandiyohi County gets roughly 125% back, because people from other counties travel to its larger grocery stores. This is federal and state money that is brought into the local economy, not local funds that would otherwise be available for other uses.

Further benefit is provided through the creation of jobs in migrant service agencies each season, which provides a transition into professional careers for recent graduates or persons entering the human service field and supplements seasonal employment such as teaching, bus driving, etc. In small towns, the addition of 20 or more human service jobs can have a big impact on the local economy. Furthermore, these positions allow communities to develop both cultural competency and a resource pool of former migrants with the job skills to work within their community.

Southern Minnesota has experienced an increase in manufacturing jobs and meat and turkey processing plants in the past several years, with a proliferation of manual labor jobs. It is widely recognized that the existing permanent labor force is not able, or in some cases not willing, to fill these jobs and that the availability of individuals following the migrant stream is essential to the health of these industries. Migrant agricultural laborers have begun to move into these non-traditional jobs on both a seasonal and permanent basis. The health of the economy in Southern Minnesota depends on the availability of a work force willing to fill these positions. Many communities are experiencing an increase in the Chicano/Latino population as people take jobs that offer high wages by Texas standards and make a vital contribution to the Minnesota economy.

## THE MIGRANT COMMUNITY IN MINNESOTA



## FOOD AND NUTRITION

## Food and Nutrition

"Men traveling alone will eat anything,  
even food straight from the can."

Migrant Worker, Breckenridge, MN

"La comida es mucha mas cara aqui."  
[Food is much more expensive here.]

Migrant Worker, Crookston, MN

## Nutrition-Related Health Problems:

"It is almost guaranteed when they walk  
in the door that they will have either diabetes  
or high blood pressure."

Migrant Health Mobile Unit Staff

For migrants and their families in Minnesota, nutrition is a very complicated issue. Studies done on migrant health issues indicate that nutrition education and services are essential factors in improving the general health and wellbeing of migrant farmworkers and their families.<sup>19</sup> Migrant families nationally face many barriers to attaining good nutrition, including low incomes and periods without work, poor or nonexistent cooking facilities, and lack of access to inexpensive supermarkets.<sup>20</sup> The majority of migrant farmworkers live in poverty.<sup>21</sup> Their low incomes further exacerbate food needs, and many migrants report periods when they go without food because of lack of financial resources. While the cost of food and shelter has increased in the last ten years, wages paid to farmworkers have not.

A recent study that looked at the effect of poverty on Chicano/Latino children in Minnesota, including migrant families, found that parents were aware that their children needed balanced diets, but their lack of money prohibited them from providing adequate nutrition. Fruits, for example, were seen as important food items but too expensive to afford on a regular basis.<sup>22</sup>

Families recognize the need for nutrition assistance programs to supplement their diets and were generally aware of their diets and the need for appropriate nutrition; however, they often lack the financial resources or knowledge of assistance programs necessary to improve their diets.<sup>23</sup> Food and nutrition resources that are available may be difficult for migrants to access, and few nutrition education programs address the cultural preferences and language needs of migrant farmworkers.

<sup>19</sup> Donna H. Runyan and Patti S. Morgan, *Nutrition and Migrant Health: Trends in Nutrition Services at Migrant Health Centers*, (Washington: Georgetown University Child Development Center, 1987) 5.

<sup>20</sup> Public Voice for Food and Health Policy, *Full Fields, Empty Cupboards: The Nutrition Status of Migrant Farmworkers in America*, (Washington: 1989) 41.

<sup>21</sup> The National Agricultural Workers Survey found that farmworker households have a 52% poverty rate, four times higher than the national household poverty rate of 12%. Migrant farmworkers have an even higher poverty rate than farmworkers in general. Samadlick, 10.

<sup>22</sup> Mario C. Compean, *La Car Humana de la Pobreza: Los Niños Chicanos-Latinos en Minnesota* [The Human Face of Poverty: Chicano-Latino Children in Minnesota], (St. Paul: HACER, 1995) 24.

<sup>23</sup> Highlights of Focus Group Interview Findings, Arlington: Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs, (1993) 1.



"People are very interested; they have never had nutrition education. The challenge has been finding [appropriate] materials."

Extension Educator, Austin, MN

Nationally, the most comprehensive survey of nutrition-related health issues was carried out in 1985 by Georgetown University Child Development Center. It involved an extensive questionnaire regarding nutrition-related health issues completed by migrant health providers throughout the United States. These providers receive federal dollars to provide health-related services to migrant farmworkers, usually through migrant clinics that are in place during the migrant season. The most common nutrition-related health problems identified for migrant workers of Mexican descent were: poor dental health, overweight/obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and anemia. When nutrition counseling was provided, it was generally for these same issues, as well as hypertension, diarrhea/constipation, general malnutrition, and infections.<sup>24</sup>

The major ancillary problems influencing the nutritional status of the population were poor housing and cooking facilities, poor prenatal care, and poor food choices or habits. Primary barriers to addressing nutritional needs were the lack of basic information on nutrition and the reactive and therapeutic (rather than proactive and preventive) nature of emergency and clinic-based nutrition programs.

These results are consistent with what has been found on a state level in Minnesota. Migrant health center staff interviewed throughout Minnesota consistently identified hypertension (high blood pressure), obesity/overweight, diabetes, dental problems (including nursing bottle mouth),<sup>25</sup> and anemia as the main nutrition-related problems they see. As one migrant health staff stated, "It is almost guaranteed when they walk in the door that they will have diabetes or hypertension."

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, the State grantee for Migrant Head Start, conducts an annual community nutrition survey with WIC nutritionists in Minnesota and Texas. Among the most common problems identified by WIC nutritionists in 1994 were: lack of nutrition education, anemia and obesity in children, nursing bottle mouth, lack of fluoride where well water is used, inadequate sewage disposal, contaminated well water, high levels of blood lead, use of herbal tea for stomach problems (some teas contain lead), lack of funding to serve all in need, delays in food stamp distribution, and lack of vegetables in daily diet.<sup>26</sup>

As on the national level, ancillary nutrition problems reported throughout Minnesota include the lack of adequate housing and cooking facilities, poor food choices or habits, lack of transportation, limited availability of fruits and vegetables at reasonable cost, and lack of fluoridated water.



"Uno no puede  
comer [solo]  
papa todo  
el año."

[One can't eat  
just potatoes all  
year long.]

Migrant Worker who  
received free potatoes  
from his employer, and  
was denied access  
to a food shelf.

<sup>24</sup> Runyan 23.

<sup>25</sup> Tooth decay due to prolonged and frequent use of a baby bottle, often containing sugary beverages.

<sup>26</sup> Barb Roth, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Letter to Ted Niskanen, January 11, 1994.



## FOOD AND NUTRITION

*"As people  
become more  
acculturated,  
their diet gets  
worse"*

Migrant Health  
Services Nurse  
Supervisor

## The Migrant Farmworker Diet:

*"We need to know more about food preparation and attitudes, also attitudes about family structures and basic cultural issues"*

Renville County Extension Workers

The type of diet used by migrant farmworkers varies greatly depending on each individual's ethnic background, family composition, age, degree of assimilation to Anglo culture, and access to cooking facilities. The majority of migrants that travel to Minnesota, however, are of Mexican descent and base their diet on traditional Mexican foods. Migrant families take pride in preparing and enjoying traditional meals and in teaching their children how to make them. The staples in the traditional diet are tortillas (flour and corn), pinto beans, rice, meat, eggs, pasta, onions, potatoes, tomatoes, chilies, corn, coffee, fruit, and lemons and limes. Meat is seldom eaten alone, but rather combined with potatoes, chilies, tomatoes or other foods. Processed foods are rarely used. Almost all families interviewed in Minnesota reported eating these basic items. Some migrants incorporated non-traditional items such as sandwich foods (white bread and bologna), cereal, fast food, and soda pop into their diets.

Traditional foods consumed in the diet are generally healthful. Consumption of beans, eggs, grains and meat probably provide enough protein; B vitamins and iron. The diet is high in sources of complex carbohydrates. Frequent fruit, tomato, onion and chili consumption provide vitamins C and A. Problems arise, however, where non-traditional foods are used and fat and salt are added.

One of the most complete nutritional analyses of the farmworker diet was done by the Public Voice for Food and Health Policy in the Delmarva Peninsula and south and south central Florida during the fall of 1987 and the winter of 1987-88.<sup>27</sup> This study found that the diet used by most migrants of Mexican descent is high in added fat and salt and may have insufficient calcium intake. The diet is also characterized by frequent consumption of fried eggs, little milk or dairy product consumption, few dark green or yellow vegetables or citrus fruits.<sup>28</sup>

The diet of migrant workers is often different in their home states than in migrant states. Migrants living in Minnesota often report eating less fruits and vegetables and less full meals in Minnesota than in their home-base states due to the high cost of food in Minnesota and the lack of time to prepare meals, as well as an unfamiliarity with some of the local produce.

<sup>27</sup> Public Voice IX.

<sup>28</sup> Public Voice 45.

In the Urban Coalition study migrant families were asked what they typically eat during each meal. Responses varied according to the type of work being done (canning or field work) and accessibility of cooking facilities and prepared food. The most common diet reported by migrants in Minnesota was:

### Breakfast:

*Coffee, fried eggs, beans, and corn or flour tortillas. Juice is sometimes used. A few families also drink fruit blended with milk or water (liquados).*

### Lunch:

*Tacos made with corn or flour tortillas, eggs cooked with sausage or potatoes and occasionally meat, or a chicken or meat stew with pasta or rice kept warm in a thermos, or a bologna or jam sandwich on white bread, fruit and soda pop or Kool-aid, and chips.*

### Dinner:

*Varies greatly, but usually a light meal. Many families eat boiled pinto beans with tortillas, cold cereal, or sandwiches, and sometimes a "guisado" or cooked meat or chicken dish with vegetables.*

### Snacks:

*Cookies and chips are common for snacks, as is soda and fruit.*

In larger towns and among families with limited food preparation facilities, consumption of fast food is common. Other families tend to eat fast food only as a special treat when they visit a larger town. In many areas, however, migrants consume soda pop and chips or other "junk" foods. Many families report using vegetables, but more often as ingredients or sauces (tomatoes and onions especially) than as a side dish.

Field research done in Minnesota confirms that the typical migrant diet is very similar to that analyzed in the Public Voice study, which found that the following percentage of Chicanos/Latinos sampled were below the recommended daily allowance for the following nutrients:

Vitamin A.....61.2%	Thiamin .....32.6%
Vitamin C.....30.6%	Riboflavin .....42.8%
Calcium .....57.1%	Niacin .....34.6%
Iron .....18.3%	Protein .....10.2%

Maintaining a healthy, balanced diet is difficult for most people. The conditions imposed by migrant labor make it all the more difficult. For most migrant families the main concern is having enough to eat throughout the migrant season. This is reflected in the high rate of obesity among migrants, especially children. Parents worry most about giving their children enough to eat, and place more importance on the availability of food than on its nutritional value or the healthiness of food preparation techniques. However, some individuals, especially young men and women, are increasingly aware of the need to monitor what they eat and the way it is prepared. Cultural perceptions also affect the food choices families make. Foods with decreased fat, such as skim milk, are often perceived to be less nutritional and using them may be associated with not adequately providing for the family.





## FOOD AND NUTRITION

Nutritionists recommend reinforcing the healthful aspects of the traditional cultural diet while helping families decrease fat and sugar, increase fiber intake (whole fruits and vegetables), and learn to be more physically active. While migrant workers spend all day doing physical labor, most farmwork is not cardiovascular in nature, and children are not encouraged to participate in cardiovascular activities. It is important to build on healthy practices and reinforce positive aspects of the diet when providing nutrition education. Some examples are:

- Encourage use of beans, rice and tortillas as nutritious.
- Encourage cooking vegetables with rice instead of discouraging the use of white rice.
- Since adults rarely drink milk, support the use of cheese as a topping, but advise use of skim or low-fat cheeses. Encourage the use of corn tortillas as a source of calcium. Encourage use of 1% or 2% milk rather than skim milk, which is viewed as "watered-down" and inferior.
- Encourage traditional uses of milk (blended with fruit, in atole, cooked with rice, etc.)
- Encourage use of boiled beans to reduce fat and the reduction of fat used in preparation of refried beans.
- Promote the use of vegetable oil instead of lard for cooking, and suggest boiling, baking or broiling meats instead of frying.
- Encourage use of whole grains, corn rather than flour tortillas, and toasting rather than frying tortillas for use in dishes.
- Promote use of fresh fruits and fruit juices for snacks.<sup>29</sup>

Recommendations made as a result of the Public Voice study include the addition of rich sources of Vitamin A (beyond chilies), decreased consumption of salt and fats, increased consumption of low-fat dairy products and increased fruit or fruit juices in place of soda or Kool-aid.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Eunice Romer Gwynn, *Dietary Practices Among Hispanic Farmworkers of Mexican Descent*, Conference Presentation, 23.

<sup>30</sup> Public Voice 47.



## Migrant Strategies to Maintain High Nutrition

Many migrant families bring food with them from Texas, depending on the size of their family and the space available in their vehicles. The items most commonly brought include food to eat during the journey to Minnesota (fruit and sandwiches) and staples for the beginning of the season: flour, tortilla mix or masa harina, beans (dried and canned), chilies, pastas, lard, lemons, potatoes and onions. If the entire family is traveling to Minnesota, any non-perishable goods they have on hand are brought to Minnesota. For some families these supplies last only the trip to Minnesota; others bring enough for several months.

When a family or individuals arrive in Minnesota, they must focus on finding housing and employment, and nutrition-related concerns become secondary. An address is necessary to qualify for many ongoing nutrition services and for registering children in migrant education programs. Upon arrival, families with strapped resources might receive nutritional assistance from Midwest Farmworker Employment and Training, which lasts for a day or two, or expedited food stamps and emergency assistance from the county. If the local food shelf is open and the family can obtain a referral, they are usually eligible for a package of emergency food. Those in towns that do not have a county seat or migrant agency presence may have to use precious gas and time to search out services. Migrants traveling to an area for the first time may never learn about local resources.

These short-term resources can help a family meet its immediate food needs. However, the lack of resources may stretch for several weeks or even months if the migrant is unable to find work or until his/her first paycheck is received. Some individuals qualify for food stamps, but become frustrated by the application process and often face delays in the processing of their case. If possible, they share resources with other family members until their situation stabilizes. Adults traveling alone face more severe hardships because they rarely qualify for county or state programs and do not have a family support system to fall back on.

Once past this initial period of emergency needs, the ability of a family to secure balanced nutrition depends in large part on its earning potential, housing situation, and eligibility for nutrition programs. In Minnesota many families live out of their cars or in hotel rooms for extended periods of time. Without proper food storage and cooking facilities, the types of foods that can be prepared are limited. Fresh produce and dairy products, for example, spoil quickly unless they are purchased daily, yet long work hours and distances from large stores make frequent purchases difficult. Electric skillets or burners are sometimes available, but again, they limit the type of food that can be prepared. Out of necessity, sandwiches and pre-prepared foods become the staple of the diet, even though they are less nutritious and more costly than other alternatives.

Some migrant housing units provided by canning facilities are dormitory style and lack cooking facilities entirely. Migrant workers have the choice of buying prepared foods, purchasing meals at the factory cafeteria, or improvising by keeping coolers in their cars and cooking on grills or electric skillets. One housing unit provides a communal cooking area with food storage lockers. However, residents note that the storage areas are too small to store any significant amount of food and that items often disappear due to lack of security. Migrant farmworkers are most satisfied by housing units that provide full cooking facilities (full refrigerators with freezers, a stove, an oven, and counters) for use by a single family. Rarely do migrant workers enjoy housing that has space dedicated to food preparation, or even a counter and kitchen sink.

Similar problems are faced by families living in overcrowded houses or apartments and sharing food preparation and storage facilities with many other people. When cooking areas are shared, it is common for the number of meals consumed to be reduced to one or two a day, jeopardizing



*"One family went without food for two days because they did not know about community resources."*

*Migrant Health  
Services Staff,  
Blooming Prairie, MN*



## FOOD AND NUTRITION

nutritional health which requires frequent, balanced meals. Very rarely do migrant workers have access to ovens, which would allow substitution of baking for frying. The old farm houses and trailers used to house migrants often have old refrigerators that cool ineffectively and wooden counters that facilitate contamination of food by bacteria.

In many areas, housing lacks running water. Families must wash dishes at an outdoor hydrant and haul water inside for cooking, which makes sanitary food preparation difficult. Exposure to pesticides is also a hazard since the area used for washing dishes may be next to a field that has been recently sprayed. Water in rural areas is often unfit to drink and non-fluoridated. Families must travel to local towns to purchase drinking water for use at home and in the field:

*"In Texas \$250 in food stamps lasts all month. Here, \$430 doesn't last. Everything is so expensive, especially meat."*

*Migrant Worker (family of eight)  
Montevideo, MN*

In about half of the migrant families interviewed, one person stays at home to cook for the others or returns from the field or work early to pick up the children from the school bus and prepare an evening meal. This is usually someone limited in their ability to work because of age, injury, or pregnancy. Where no migrant education programs are available, families typically take breakfast and lunch to the field or eat a light breakfast at home.

To the extent that cooking facilities allow, migrants try to economize food. Many migrant families feel that their food stamps run out much more quickly in Minnesota due to both the cost of food and limits placed on food choices because of living situations. Families usually travel to a large grocery store once a week or every two weeks to buy staples. Larger grocery stores are preferred because they stock more economy-sized and ethnic foods, and shoppers are less likely to experience harassment. Those who live in small towns pay high prices for staples they have to buy between trips to the grocery store.

Migrant workers report eating less fruits and vegetables while in Minnesota. Fewer homemade traditional dishes and stews are made due to lack of time for preparation and unavailability of ingredients used in Mexican cooking. Lack of time to sit down and eat a complete meal was also mentioned by migrant farmworkers as a barrier to good nutrition. People must "grab what they can" on their way to work. One worker described the food she eats in Minnesota as "mas taqueado," or more taco-based food that is easily folded into a tortilla and carried to the field. Although some town stores carry Mexican ingredients, they are often very expensive or not the same as the products people purchase in their home state.

# Migrant Service Agencies:

*"[geographic] boundaries are irrelevant to the families we are serving. We need to begin to develop services that go beyond boundaries."*

*Southeastern Minnesota Initiative Fund Staff*



## History:

Although migrant labor has been an important part of U.S. agriculture since the late 1800s, legislation regulating migrant labor and government programs designed for migrant farmworkers were nonexistent until the 1940s. During the first part of the century, no assistance was provided to migrant workers in agricultural states. Migrant workers were dependent on the farmers or companies that contracted with them for advances, which allowed them to purchase food throughout the season. Accounts were reconciled at the end of the season. In many cases, farmworkers would barely break even or would end up owing money. Far from providing public assistance to children of migrant farmworkers, most school districts discouraged migrant children from attending school except during the May census, which determined funding for the districts.<sup>11</sup> Most government programs available to year-round residents were not available to farmworkers because many programs required up to six months of state residency before eligibility.

Some groups, however, recognized the needs that existed within the migrant community. One of the earliest groups was the Home Mission Council, which opened a summer school near Winn, Michigan, in 1936 to serve infants through 14-year-olds.<sup>12</sup> The school provided medical assistance through a volunteer doctor and nurse who saw migrant workers and was supported by donations from businesses in Mount Pleasant, Michigan. The Home Mission Council began programs throughout the Midwest, and by 1942 it sponsored 22 programs in Michigan, three in Minnesota and one in Ohio.

Despite efforts by charitable organizations, migrant farmworkers were routinely denied services at traditional human service agencies or effectively excluded by the lack of Spanish speaking staff and service delivery models that did not take into account the needs of migrant farmworkers.<sup>13</sup> Migrants are often unfamiliar with the communities they live in while away from their home states and are thus less likely to access services. They often lack transportation, and the long hours they work make it difficult to apply for services during normal working hours. It was not until the 1960s that Government programs began recognizing these barriers and specifically targeting the needs of migrant farmworkers.<sup>14</sup>

A series of legislative actions established special funds for services for migrant farmworkers, which led to the development of specialized agencies. These programs were not designed to change the farm labor market, but rather to provide services to ease the conditions of farmworkers. Rather than demand higher wages and better living conditions which would result in higher costs to farmers, these programs used tax dollars to subsidize the cost of migrant labor. In effect, the benefits received by migrant farmworkers are a subsidy to the agricultural economy and protect the profit margins of farmers and the large companies that buy their crops.

*"The need is so much greater than anybody's resources."*

*Migrant Advocate,  
Clara City, MN*

<sup>11</sup> Valdes 82.

<sup>12</sup> Valdes 85.

<sup>13</sup> Valdes 187.

<sup>14</sup> Martin 2.





## Service Program Utilization:

Many migrant families come to Minnesota to work and never utilize the food and nutrition resources available to them. These families usually have a relationship with a grower established over many years. They usually have enough members old enough to work that they can earn a decent family income while in Minnesota and save money to take home. They often travel with members of their extended family and help one another until they receive their first pay check. Some are able to use savings to pay for travel expenses and food at the beginning of the season or secure advances from the farmers they contract with.

Others, equally pushed by economic necessity, come without an established job or housing and are subject to the uncertainty of weather conditions and availability of work. Families may experience food crises during the season if the weather is bad and they are unable to work or if their contract with one grower is finished and they have difficulty finding more work. This is especially true for farmworkers who do not have a steady grower or who are coming to Minnesota for the first time. These conditions make it necessary for some families to seek assistance when they first arrive in Minnesota or sometime during the migrant season. Those who need assistance gain it through two types of agencies: those developed specifically to serve the migrant farmworker population (commonly called "migrant service agencies") and those that serve the general population but for which some farmworkers are also eligible.

A recent survey of food shelf users carried out by the Minnesota Food Education and Resource Center (MNFERC) provides some insight regarding the migrant community in Minnesota.<sup>15</sup> Some food shelf users (429 from 50 different food shelves) completed a Spanish version of the survey. Respondents were not asked whether or not they were migrant workers, but the timing of the report and location of the food shelves submitting Spanish forms allow us to assume that the majority of respondents using the Spanish survey are migrant workers.<sup>16</sup>

The following data refers to families responding to the Spanish version of the survey. For those respondents that indicated their income, 90% reported a household income of less than \$1,000 for the month of June. 90% of those that indicated their hourly wage reported earning less than \$7.00 per hour, and 50% reported earning less than \$5.30 per hour. Despite the poverty status of most of the respondents, 66% indicated that the primary source of income for their family in the past month was work, not assistance programs. The only other significant source of income identified by families was AFDC which was a primary income source for only 21% of the respondents. This figure appears low given that 90% reported household incomes of less than \$1,000 for the month of June and over 70% of the households were households with children, making it likely that they would qualify for AFDC.

20% of the respondents received food from friend or relatives to assist with a food emergency. The government assistance programs most frequently utilized were WIC (30% of respondents) and food stamps. 55% of the respondents had received food stamps in the last month.<sup>17</sup> Of those who did not receive food stamps, 76% had not applied for them. This could indicate either a resistance to using government assistance program or a lack of knowledge about available resources. 61% of the respondents indicated that children in their household had received reduced price or free school breakfast in the last year, and 57% indicated they had received school lunch.

Despite common perceptions that migrant workers overuse food shelves or use more than one food shelf, 73% of the respondents reported only 1 or 2 visits to a food shelf in the last twelve months, 83% reported using only one food shelf, and 66% indicated that this was their first visit to a food shelf.

*"If we paid people above poverty wages, a lot of these programs wouldn't be needed."*

County Financial  
Services Supervisor,  
Montevideo, MN

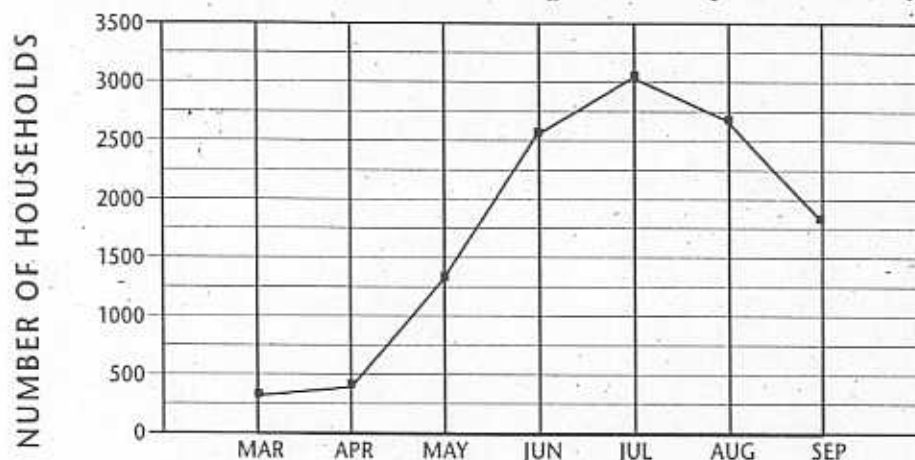
<sup>15</sup> Surveys were sent to over 180 food shelves throughout Minnesota to be completed during the month of July by individuals requesting food. It is important to note that the migrants who are able to access food shelves are those who have some knowledge of the social service system and have ready access to transportation. Those individuals with the most need may not be represented because they lack the knowledge or resources necessary to utilize the human service system.

<sup>16</sup> The survey was conducted at the beginning of peak migrant season, and most of the food shelves returning Spanish forms are in areas with canning factories or sugar beet production. Almost all respondents using the Spanish form identified themselves as Latino (96.9%).

<sup>17</sup> 80% of these recipients had been receiving food stamps for less than 6 months.



# Migrant Household Participation by Month (1995)



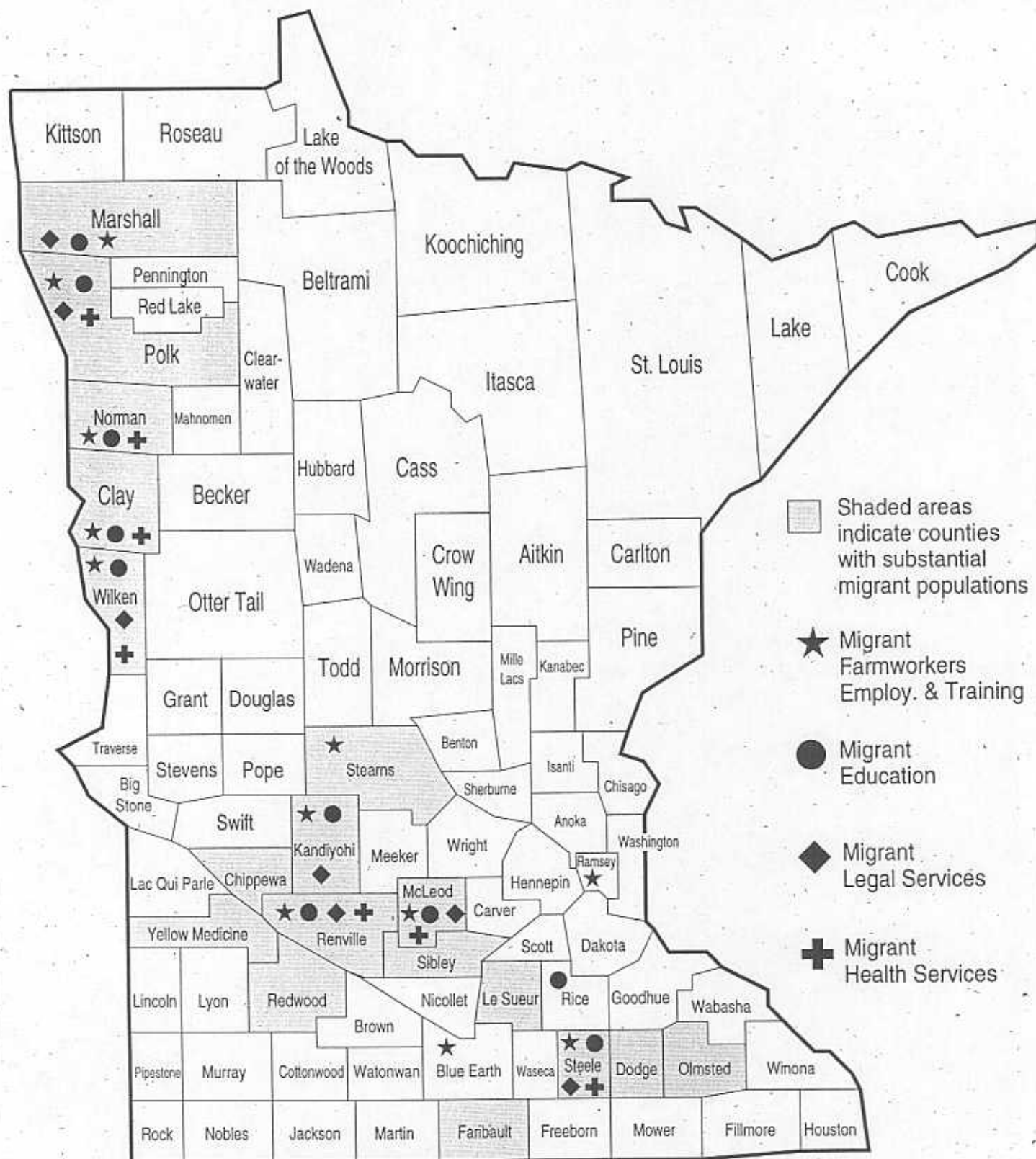
**Migrant  
Households -  
Statewide**  
Number of  
Migrant Households on  
Public Assistance

Source:  
Minnesota Department  
of Human Services

COUNTY	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
Aitkin	0	0	0	0	0	27	0
Anoka	1	1	2	5	6	2	8
Becker	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Beltrami	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
Benton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Big Stone	0	0	0	1	3	3	0
Blue Earth	1	1	1	3	2	4	3
Brown	0	1	15	36	52	55	37
Carlton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carver	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Cass	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chippewa	0	3	36	133	157	134	58
Chisago	2	0	7	7	7	7	6
Clay	12	44	220	484	507	458	226
Clearwater	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cook	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cottonwood	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Crow Wing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dakota	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Dodge	1	10	54	57	107	109	105
Douglas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Faribault	0	3	3	7	14	17	13
Fillmore	0	1	8	7	9	7	7
Freeborn	0	2	8	15	20	20	17
Goodhue	0	1	1	3	4	3	2
Grant	0	0	5	17	22	11	1
Hennepin	3	2	3	2	3	5	5
Houston	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hubbard	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Isanti	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Itasca	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Jackson	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kanabec	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kandiyohi	9	36	97	116	122	88	46
Kittson	1	4	12	30	34	22	5
Koochiching	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LaQuiParle	0	0	0	6	9	9	9
Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake of the Woods	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Le Sueur	0	1	4	41	97	106	89
Lincoln	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lyon	3	4	5	3	5	3	1
McLeod	1	2	40	95	164	138	47
Mahnomen	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

COUNTY	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
Marshall	70	21	37	68	83	69	45
Martin	1	1	7	9	11	12	9
Meeker	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mille Lacs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Morrison	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Mower	1	1	2	2	4	5	4
Murray	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nicollet	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
Nobles	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Norman	0	0	23	113	138	103	40
Olmsted	5	22	57	134	157	137	102
Otter Tail	2	2	7	7	12	7	10
Pennington	0	1	6	2	6	4	3
Pine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pipestone	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Polk	24	59	188	375	420	322	232
Pope	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ramsey	2	2	1	2	1	1	4
Red Lake	0	0	0	2	3	3	0
Redwood	0	4	8	26	28	32	20
Renville	6	35	151	298	371	311	187
Rice	2	4	21	36	54	54	45
Rock	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Roseau	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
St. Louis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scott	0	0	5	9	11	10	2
Sherburne	0	0	0	0	6	8	6
Sibley	0	0	2	16	23	29	21
Stearns	0	16	45	42	48	45	24
Steele	16	24	68	75	95	83	73
Stevens	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Swift	0	0	0	7	8	8	4
Todd	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Traverse	0	0	7	21	26	22	2
Wabasha	0	0	0	4	6	6	5
Wadena	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Waseca	1	3	7	9	16	20	11
Washington	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Watsonwan	2	1	2	4	5	3	3
Wilkin	4	24	119	210	214	143	25
Winona	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Wright	0	0	2	0	5	19	2
Yellow Medicine	0	4	9	14	12	11	5
STATE TOTAL	175	344	1,299	2,559	3,115	2,703	1,576

# LOCATION OF MIGRANT FARMWORKER SERVICES



Source: Department of Human Services

The income levels and low wage rates of these families indicate their precarious nutritional status. This is further demonstrated by the fact that 67% of respondents had no health insurance, and 49% indicated that at least one child in their household had no health insurance.

## *Migrant Service Agencies:*

Agencies created specifically to serve the migrant community are seen as more accessible than those that include migrants among other participants. They open satellite offices in areas with high concentrations of migrant workers to coincide with crop seasons; use service delivery models and educational materials designed to meet the specific needs and concerns of migrants; employ bilingual and bicultural staff; and have an understanding of the migrant community. However, their funding constraints and the seasonal focus of their programs also present challenges in coordinating services among themselves and with other community agencies.

There are currently 12 federal programs with a combined budget of \$600 million targeted at farmworkers across the country. Most of these programs determine eligibility based on income, migrant status, and amount of agricultural work done by the applicant in a given time frame. However, because each program was developed separately, the income guidelines, definition of migrant status, and amount of agricultural work and types of work needed to qualify vary from program to program.

The largest programs, known as "the big four," include Migrant Education, Migrant Health, Job Training Partnership Act 402, and Migrant Head Start. Other programs include the High School Equivalency Program, College Assistance Migrant Program, Migrant Even Start, Migrant Vocational Rehabilitation, the Women, Infant and Children's Supplemental Feeding Program (WIC) dollars available specifically for migrant farmworkers, Migrant Legal Services, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Housing Loans and Grants, and Community Services Block Grants. This section describes the agencies implementing these funds in Minnesota, their role in addressing the food and nutritional needs of the migrant community, and the challenges they face.

### *Migrant Health Services, Inc.*

Migrant Health Services Incorporated (MHSI) was established in 1962 to provide basic health services to the migrant community, and belongs to a network of migrant health programs located throughout the nation. MHSI provides primary health care including physician referral, prenatal care, dental care, vision referrals, health education and WIC (at most centers), as well as battered woman's programs and a chemical dependency program. It has a permanent year-round office as well as nine summer offices and one mobile unit, which serves migrant workers in remote areas of the state. Nutrition services include on-site WIC programs and nutritional counseling. The main office provides culturally and linguistically appropriate materials for use by site staff. Each site has at least three staff, including a nurse and a translator. Home visits and health assessments are provided on a regular basis. The mobile unit operates during the evening to accommodate migrant workers' schedules, and several sites offer evening clinics.

Migrants pay \$5 per family to register with MHSI and \$2 for every voucher issued for a physician referral, vision exam or prescription. MHSI will cover the cost of medical services up to a certain limit for various services. MHSI's ability to serve the community is restricted by its limited number of locations and the lack of providers willing to accept vouchers and referrals from MHSI. Because of funding restrictions, the amount covered for services is limited. While







"The school  
(family service  
worker) has  
helped me with  
rides and  
translation;  
treated me like  
family."

Migrant Worker,  
Montevideo, MN

culturally appropriate bilingual services are available at MHSI sites, that is not necessarily true of the clinics or doctors that actually provide the services for which vouchers are issued.

MHSI has a Camp Health Aide program which trains migrant workers in three Southern Minnesota migrant camps to act as a first point of contact for migrant health needs. The Camp Health Aides receive training in first aid, CPR, community resources and referral processes. This program has had considerable success because migrant workers are more willing to approach someone of their same background who lives nearby when they have a health concern.

### **Title One Elementary Education**

Migrant Education was created on the federal level in 1965. In Minnesota, the Department of Education operates a seven-week migrant education program for children ages 3 to 21 at 13 sites throughout Minnesota, including 11 secondary-level evening programs. Sites, and some costs, are shared with Tri-Valley Head Start centers.

Nutrition services include breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack, as well as nursing staff, which are provided in collaboration with Tri-Valley Migrant Head Start. Children receive comprehensive health screening and follow-up. Some nutrition education is incorporated in the curriculum.

### **Tri-Valley Opportunity Council**

Tri-Valley provides Migrant Head Start and daycare services for children ages six months through five years. There are 15 sites throughout Minnesota, most operating for seven weeks and two that run for 12 weeks.

Nutrition services for children who participate include on-site meals (breakfast, morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack), health screening, nursing services and regional nutrition coordinators available to work with families or nurses at each site.

Family service workers at each site work with parents to make sure children's health needs are met and appropriate referrals are made. They make home visits and provide transportation to appointments and interpretive services as necessary. Some dental and medical treatment can be paid for through agency funds. Last year, for example, 800 children were screened for dental problems. Of those, 300 needed dental treatment, and 150 were able to complete their dental treatment before leaving the state.

Migrant Head Start made an effort to incorporate nutritional lessons in all of its classes (two times per week) and distributed a calendar emphasizing nutrition and a cookbook of healthy traditional Mexican recipes to all parents. While few families use cookbooks, they enjoyed receiving it. It is possible that some will use it to modify the way they prepare foods or to comply with a diabetic diet.

Many families enroll their children in Migrant Head Start and Chapter One education programs. Approximately 3,000 children were enrolled during the 1995 migrant season. Children enrolled in these programs receive three meals a day based on USDA guidelines and the food pyramid. The main complaint about the meals is that they are not culturally appropriate so the children, especially preschoolers, do not like them and thus arrive home hungry. Some schools have made an effort to provide more appropriate foods and have met with mixed success. Many children receive 80% of their food from the school program; however, this program lasts only seven weeks in most areas and parents have asked for a longer summer program.



## Midwest Farmworker Employment and Training (MFET)

MFET provides Job Training Partnership Act services, primarily in the form of job training and development. This agency is often the first point of contact for migrant workers because of the supportive services it offers, including assistance with food, shelter, and transportation. Fifteen summer offices are maintained in Minnesota with extended hours during high points in the season.

Nutrition services include referrals to other agencies and emergency food vouchers. MFET provided general food assistance in the form of vouchers to 11,678 persons (3,396 households) from October 1, 1994, through July 31, 1995.<sup>18</sup> Although MFET formerly provided Emergency Food Assistance through government surplus foods, it now provides emergency food through grocery store vouchers only.

MFET has been criticized in several communities for being reluctant to share information about its programs. Consequently, a number of providers indicated that they do not know whether to refer clients to MFET or not and that they are hesitant to promote collaborative efforts with MFET. Service providers requesting information about MFET in a given community are told to submit their request in writing to the main office.<sup>19</sup> Local staff can give out little information without approval from the main office. These examples of missed opportunities may continue to inhibit coordination efforts and would appear to be an obstacle in the provision of much needed services to migrants in Minnesota.

## Migrant Legal Services (MLS)

MLS provides free legal services for civil matters, including wage and public benefits disputes, and operates summer offices in nine Minnesota towns. Nutrition-related services include advocacy for food stamp cases and referrals to other agencies. In some counties, migrant workers are routinely denied public benefits regardless of eligibility. MLS advocates on behalf of clients and urges counties to reverse decisions made in error. In several cases MLS has filed administrative appeals against counties that were found to routinely discriminate against migrant workers, bringing about fundamental changes in county practices. Wage claims represented by MLS also affect the nutritional status of migrant families because they increase the capacity of families to purchase food. MLS also provides valuable client education about legal rights and responsibilities through both its satellite offices and its annual bilingual publication, "El Amanecer." A shortage of available staff, both paralegal and attorneys, as well as severe funding cuts in legal aid programs nationally, have made it difficult for MLS to meet the needs of all clients.



*"There is more concern about state requirements than about what the kids throw away or won't eat."*

*Migrant Education  
Health Assistant*

<sup>18</sup> Minnesota Department of Economic Security, 1995.

<sup>19</sup> Repeated written, oral and telephone requests for information regarding MFET services made during the course of this research were not responded to.



## Migrant Agency Challenges

Typically, migrant service agencies attempt to provide flexible and appropriate services, allocating resources to address the areas of greatest need. Most migrant agencies have outreach strategies designed to reach migrant farmworkers. Agency staff visit migrant camps and work-sites to inform migrants of available resources. These agencies face budget and staff constraints, which can result in limited and inconsistent office hours and short program length (for summer offices). Other barriers include lack of Chicano/Latino staff and limited culturally and linguistically appropriate health education materials.

*"There needs to be more coordination [of services], but there is a lack of time and public relations to do it. There are different programs Migrant Health could tie into but we don't always know about them."*

*Nurse Supervisor, MHSI, Moorhead, MN*

Although some summer staff return year after year, all migrant agencies have a large number of new hires annually. Because many migrant agencies employ staff in offices spread throughout the state, they can not train staff on every aspect of service delivery or on the agencies present in each community. This often results in poor knowledge of available community services and/or poor communication about services. For example, one migrant service agency was referring all its clients to one local food shelf because it was unfamiliar with the three other food shelves in the area. The food shelf receiving the referrals became overwhelmed and decided to stop serving migrants because it could not meet demand. Referral services are much more effective when a central office has taken the initiative to establish links with permanent community resources. Similarly, permanent local services may not make the effort to establish links with migrant service agencies because of their seasonal nature.

Each migrant agency has eligibility criteria, which is determined by the relevant legislation and agency policy. Thus, while someone who has been out of the active migrant stream for 26 months may still qualify for Migrant Education Programs, they may not qualify for MFET services. Similarly, documentation of legal status is not required for MLS or MHSI services, but is required for some MFET programs. This often results in haphazard coordination among migrant service agencies and confusion among migrant workers and human service providers about the role of each agency.

It is baffling to migrants that they must go through a separate application process for each agency that has "migrant" in its name, and sometimes be denied services even though they consider themselves migrants because they don't fit a particular agency's definition. This situation is further aggravated by the fact that each agency does outreach independently. Coordination of education and outreach activities among migrant agencies would be a more effective method of educating migrants about available services.

*"People think all the migrant programs are the same program, and have the same guidelines. That causes much confusion."*

*Family Service  
Worker,  
Montevideo, MN*

## General Service Agencies:

Farmworkers face difficulties in accessing available services that the general population may not. For example, many programs require residency in a county or a state. The substantial payments migrants earn during brief periods (harvest, for example) may make them ineligible for services during other parts of the year. Because farmworkers are paid on a piece-rate basis, they do not receive benefits such as sick leave, overtime and vacation. While canning work may qualify an individual for unemployment compensation, most field work done for farmers does not.



Those who qualify for services and know where to apply for them tap into the safety net available to any other Minnesota resident. Although patterns vary across the state and among family types, most families that utilize services in Minnesota receive the greatest number of services when they first arrive. These may include emergency assistance for rent, food stamps, and possibly Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) from the county, food from food shelves, and food, gas, or rent vouchers from Midwest Farmworker Employment and Training (MFET). Many of these services are provided on a one-time per year or seasonal basis. As they begin to earn income, families may lose their AFDC benefits and receive a reduced food stamp package, although those who are unable to find work may continue receiving assistance at their original level. Individuals who use the WIC program usually maintain the same level of use throughout the season and also participate in the program in Texas, although they may miss a few months while they are trying to establish a home in Minnesota.

Food shelves are the only general food resource available to all members of the community, including single men and couples without children. AFDC is limited to families with dependent children, and the WIC program is limited to pregnant and lactating women and children up to five years of age. Migrants who are not eligible for county or migrant program services may turn to informal sources such as churches or family networks for assistance. Food shelves also provide a valuable safety net in these circumstances or when food stamps cannot be processed rapidly.

*"Deben poner gente que va a ver las necesidades de cada persona, que tiene paciencia." [They should hire people that are able to see each individual's need, that have patience.]*

Migrant Worker, Glencoe, MN

Agencies serving non-migrants are seen as being less friendly by migrants because they are less familiar with migrant culture, have limited (if any) bilingual staff, and have programs designed to fit the general population, which may not be appropriate for migrant workers. Migrant workers are often unaware of lower-profile programs such as public health nursing and extension office services. In order to access these services, migrants, like anyone else, must meet certain criteria, which usually includes income guidelines and unmet need.



### County Services:

*"Migrant season is literally the tail that wags the dog here."*

*Renville County Financial Supervisor*

Migrant workers can be awarded food stamps and AFDC from the Minnesota county they reside in as long as their case in Texas is closed. Eligibility for each program is determined using "prospective" budgeting, basing decisions on what the farmworker is likely to earn in the next month. The Minnesota system for awarding food stamps and AFDC does not always take into account the bills that workers have in Texas, nor does it allow for adjustments in food stamp grants once they have been issued regardless of whether a migrant family works the originally projected hours or not.

Many families feel that they are made to jump through too many hoops to receive county assistance. They are often asked to return several times with additional documentation, experience long waits, and are often discouraged from staying in the area or applying for assistance. One example is of a pregnant woman who went to a county human service's office to apply for Medical Assistance. The financial worker demanded proof of the woman's pregnancy, even though she was in her eighth month and visibly pregnant. The financial worker did not explore whether the woman had any proof with her (she, in fact, had doctor's bills from Texas in her purse that would have proven her pregnancy), but insisted that she get a note from a local doctor. The woman went to the migrant health clinic in a neighboring town and returned with a hand written note verifying her pregnancy. Even then, the legitimacy of the note was questioned. These barriers result in lost work time, repeated trips between offices, and frustration for migrant farmworkers.

The lack of bilingual staff and materials aggravates this situation in many counties, as does the use of inappropriate interpreters (i.e. minor children). In many cases, a family member with limited English will complete the application but leave the county office with little understanding of what was done and what to expect in terms of benefits. Many families, for example, leave the office without understanding that food stamps will be sent during the month according to a numeric system based on their case number, and are alarmed when they do not receive their food stamps at the beginning of the month.

An estimated income form is completed by the grower and used by county social services to determine benefits for a family. The farmer or other employer is supposed to indicate the amount of income s/he is "reasonably certain" the farmworker will earn. Yet many farmers are by nature optimistic in their forecasts about weather and work, and many migrants complain that growers estimate high earnings and report pay dates that are not accurate (i.e. monthly instead of at the end of the season). County employees often feel that migrants misrepresent their earnings or manipulate the forms. Counties are required to take into account the farmworker's estimate of the amount s/he will work. However, farmworkers are often unaware of this fact, and sign the grower form because they are told they have to, or because they do not understand that by signing they are agreeing with what the farmer estimates.

There is a lack of understanding among migrant families regarding the rules for AFDC and reporting income, as well. A number of counties report that families come back to a county owing money because they failed to report their income in a timely fashion. As a result, their benefits have been adjusted retroactively. This is due to lack of information and understanding at the time of receiving benefits.

*"Migrants will sign off on a form when they don't agree... they are either coerced or don't understand the form."*

*Migrant Legal  
Services Staff*



Transferring a case from Texas to Minnesota can cause difficulty. Migrant workers must notify their case worker in Texas ten days before the end of the month if they want their case closed for the next month. Once benefits are in the pipeline, they cannot be canceled and food stamps must be returned to the county before the case can be closed. This is not a problem when the whole family travels to Minnesota; because they can demonstrate that no one will have access to the Texas food stamps. It is problematic, however, if a family member stays behind because they could theoretically cash the stamps; so the family in Minnesota must contact that family member and have them return the stamps and close the case before they can receive benefits in Minnesota.

### **Food Shelves:**

Some food shelves experience very high seasonal demand in the weeks or months before migrant work begins and the first pay check is received. The increase in food shelf usage can be as much as 100% to 400% in areas with very high rates of migrant laborers. Some food shelves in the state have made special efforts to accommodate the migrant population with bilingual staff and culturally appropriate foods. Some canning factories recognize the increased need associated with their workers and make efforts to subsidize the food shelves. The Rice/Steele Emergency Network, for example, secured funding to provide bilingual food shelf staff, increase the capacity of food shelves in four counties, and provide culturally appropriate food. In other communities, however, migrants are served reluctantly, and local residents avoid donating food or volunteering their time during summer months when migrants use the food shelf. Some food shelves close down entirely during the summer. The prevailing attitude in these cases is that migrant workers are not "our own" and that the food shelf is really only there to serve the permanent community.

A food shelf in the Fargo-Moorhead area is notorious among migrant workers for treating Chicanos/Latinos poorly, especially migrant workers. Migrants tell stories of having food baskets literally thrown at them and of being told to go back to Texas and request help there. Another food shelf was denying assistance to migrants who worked for a certain employer because he had written a letter stating that his employees did not need assistance even though many had been waiting three or four weeks to start, living only on the potatoes, carrots, and radishes the farmer provided. The food shelf later realized that the migrant workers were in need and changed its policy.

Most food shelves try to verify the county of residence to avoid duplication of services. Residency requirements mean little to some migrant families who are trying to scrape by until work begins. In many cases food shelves will ask for social security numbers in order to track an individual over time or for a referral from county social services that demonstrates both need and county residence. While these requirements may not pose a barrier for families already using social services, it does for individuals without legal documentation who are not eligible for county services, or for those who do not have time to go through the extensive application process and are experiencing a one-time emergency food need. Many families find the county application process humiliating and will not go through it even if they have tremendous need. Some food shelves will accept referrals from other migrant service agencies such as Midwest Farmworker Employment and Training or Migrant Health Services. However, these agencies also require an initial application. The result is the shuffling of migrant families between agencies a number of times before they can receive the assistance they need.



*"We had 99 applications in June, and only five of those were our own people."*

*Food Shelf Volunteer,  
Renville MN*



The other major issue related to food shelf usage is the lack of bilingual staff and culturally appropriate foods. Many migrant farmworkers suffer from diabetes or hypertension. The lack of bilingual staff makes it difficult for them to communicate their food needs to food shelf volunteers who are preparing baskets. Even more important, many food shelves do not stock the staple foods that many migrant families eat: dried pinto beans, rice, flour, oil or shortening, tomato products, etc. One food shelf had oil available but provided it only on request because of its expense. Given language and cultural barriers, it is unlikely that many individuals would request oil, especially since it is kept out of view. Other food shelves are unaware that migrants prefer certain foods. At one food shelf, for example, a volunteer proudly displayed a pile of dried navy beans—the only dried beans available, and not at all a part of traditional migrant diets. Many migrant families are unfamiliar with the boxed mixes often given at food shelves or with ways to prepare other foods they don't normally use.

Culturally appropriate items are seldom available to food shelves from regional food banks, and food shelves must purchase them with cash funds. This is very difficult for some food shelves, especially those in small towns with limited resources. However, culturally appropriate foods (beans and rice, for example) are usually inexpensive. A food package made up of culturally appropriate foods may actually be less expensive than a "traditional" food package. Providing culturally appropriate food is one of the best ways to promote good nutrition and eliminate food waste.

### *Staples of the Migrant Diet*

Flour  
Canned Pinto or Refried Beans  
Dry Pinto Beans  
Tomato Paste or Sauce  
Oil  
Potatoes  
Eggs  
Canned corn, green beans, tomatoes

Rice  
Vermicelli pasta  
Baking Powder  
Masa Harina /Maseca Tortilla Mix  
Onions  
Garlic  
Cheese (*farmer cheese or queso fresco*)  
Fresh tomatoes, zucchini, onions, corn

*"WIC administrators, even nutritionists,  
don't understand the food people eat, and  
God forbid the child should have an allergy."*

*Migrant Advocate, Moorhead, MN*



### **WIC:**

WIC is one of the preferred and consistently utilized programs available to the migrant community. One of the major reasons is the ease with which certification is transferred from state to state. A migrant family need only bring their current certification card from Texas (no special visits to their Texas WIC office are necessary), and their benefits are transferred. If an individual needs to be re-certified or certified for the first time, most centers can do so almost immediately. Another reason it is well-liked is that in many communities migrant health services administers the WIC program, and migrants feel comfortable going to migrant health centers where there are bilingual staff and their cultural food preferences are more likely to be understood. Where WIC is not available through migrant health, migrants must go to their local WIC center, which is often less accessible due to the lack of bilingual staff. In these settings, the nutritional education component of WIC is often dropped due to language barriers and time pressures of serving an increased case load.

### **Extension Services:**

Minnesota Extension Services provides individual and group instruction on food preparation, food budgeting and shopping skills. Extension workers sometimes provide nutrition education through schools, WIC clinics and local food shelves. Extension services are not provided specifically to the migrant communities, although some extension workers have begun to target migrant schools and camps in their work.

General service provision agencies that attempt to work with the migrant community often have difficulty during the first years of service because they lack the understanding of migrant culture and access to appropriate educational tools that are necessary. However, they have a year-round staff as well as planning and follow-up capabilities in local communities that migrant service agencies do not. The teaming of these two types of agencies holds the potential for greatly improved nutritional services for the migrant community.



*A makeshift migrant kitchen.*



## Barriers to Service

*"Necesitamos mas información en tiendas, lavanderias, de las clases de ayuda que existen." [We need more information in grocery stores and laundromats about the types of help that are available.]*

*Migrant Worker, Glencoe, MN*

### *Lack of awareness or eligibility:*

Individuals can only utilize assistance programs that they are aware of. Most migrant workers prefer to rely on family networks or their own survival techniques (savings or food brought from Texas) when possible. When these resources are not sufficient, they seek outside help. Service providers often assume that all migrant workers in an area are aware of their services because of the excellent word of mouth communication that exists within the community. They fail to realize that this form of information is unreliable and insufficient. Migrants in a given area may not know each other and feel uncomfortable revealing their economic necessity. Those who have never accessed services are unlikely to understand how the human service network works. Even if an individual is aware that a service exists, s/he is often reluctant to use it if it is unclear where the service is located and what is required of an applicant. Chicano/Latino culture stresses respect for authority figures, and many individuals may not ask for details on how to apply for a service or what assistance is provided because such questions would be considered impolite. Migrants often note that they have heard of a service but have not gone to investigate because they do not know where it is or how to get there.

Those who seem most able to obtain services are those who have been in the same community in the past or who have a relative or close friend who can take them around. This demonstrates that personal contact is almost always more effective than relying on written notices to inform people about services.

Even if migrants are aware of basic eligibility guidelines, they may not be aware of their rights and responsibilities within a given program. There is no motive for agencies to provide education regarding client rights. While some migrant agencies serve as advocates for their clients (i.e. Migrant Legal Services makes an effort to educate clients about rights related to public benefits and pay issues), this is not the primary activity of any agency, and thus takes second place to more pressing issues which arise during the migrant season.

*"I'm not sure  
how to contact  
[migrant workers],  
where to contact  
them. It takes  
time to  
build trust with  
a community"*

*Minnesota  
Extension Worker*



## Referral Systems:

Once a family is in contact with an agency (usually MFET or the county), they may be referred to another agency. However, referrals are not always made, especially during the busy migrant season when staff are trying to process many individuals as quickly as possible and available services are not always explained adequately. One migrant worker recalled being asked if he wanted a referral to the "courthouse" without any explanation that the courthouse is where the local food shelf is located. Because migrant service agencies function on a seasonal basis, there is not always time for direct service staff to find out about agencies or services available in a given community or to make appropriate referrals.

*"Counties know migrants are coming in large numbers for a certain crop at a certain time. Yet they have inadequate personnel, and migrants become discouraged with waits up to five hours."*

*Migrant Legal Services Staff*

Most agencies require an intake process to determine eligibility and make referrals only after the process is completed. This discourages migrants from using services since there is usually a long wait involved at the beginning of the migrant season. If an individual knows s/he will not qualify for county human services but needs a referral in order to access a local food shelf, there is a strong incentive not to go through the process at all. In communities that have a number of migrant service agencies, migrants may be bounced back and forth between agencies. In areas where there is no such presence, the cost and time involved in traveling act as barriers.

Because of limited funds, agencies that provide emergency cash and food resources prefer to be the "last resort." Ensuring that all other possible sources of support have been exhausted, however, often results in an extra burden for migrant farmworker families who must make repeat visits to the same office.

## Language Issues:

Both service providers and migrants recognize the language barrier as one of the most difficult to overcome. Often a social service provider will have to explain something repeatedly before it is understood or will have to guess at some part of an applicant's answer. In some cases, migrant clients come into the county office every time they get a written notice because they cannot read English and want to make sure the notice is not about a problem with their case. This defeats the time-saving purpose of written notices.

Children as young as eight years old, relatives, and county clerical staff, who are bilingual but often unfamiliar with county programs, are all occasionally used as interpreters without any assessment of their skills. This situation places stress on the interpreter and can lead to mistakes. Using a child as an interpreter places a tremendous burden of responsibility on the child and disturbs the normal parent-child relationship because the child, rather than the parent, is now responsible for securing resources for the family. Migrant families are all too familiar with long lines at county human service offices and with the fact that requesting an interpreter may prolong their wait. This encourages them to have someone interpret for them who may or may not have the necessary skills or understanding.

One woman told of how she had a new acquaintance interpret for her. The interview had already been quite lengthy when the financial worker requested three years worth of financial



*"We need more coordination and awareness among human service providers, less territorialism."*

*Renville County  
Extension Worker*



history. The woman had the necessary information with her, but the interpreter felt they should just skip on to the next section since giving all the information would take more time. The woman did not feel that she could request more from the interpreter—after all, he was doing her a favor—so the section was skipped. The inadequate system for providing interpretation meant that her need was not adequately assessed, and so the benefits were denied. In many cases interpreters are provided only when absolutely necessary. People struggle through interviews in English without fully understanding the process or the outcome as explained in English and are left with partial and often inadequate information.

Some counties with major increases in their migrant population have made efforts to accommodate those migrants who do not speak English. However, some counties who have seen increasing numbers of migrants for several years have resisted dealing with their issues and provide inadequate services. Bilingual workers are superior to hired interpreters because they allow for more accurate and respectful (culturally appropriate) communication.

For services other than government assistance services, inappropriate language becomes a barrier to learning. Nutrition information provided in English or poorly translated Spanish is by and large of limited benefit. Materials translated from English often ignore cultural norms or practices, making them irrelevant to the target population. Some locally translated materials contain mistakes that make the materials unintelligible, often because they were translated by someone who may be orally fluent in Spanish but who has never learned how to spell or use accent marks correctly. Due to a shortage of resources in small towns, there is usually no one to check the translation. Language barriers or migrant's respect for authority figures prevents them from questioning errors or telling service providers that materials are unintelligible.

Along with language and interpretation issues comes the concept of cultural competency. While an important first step, the hiring of bilingual or even Chicano/Latino workers does not guarantee that services are provided in a way that respects the culture of the applicant. Those most likely to understand and accommodate the culture of migrant farmworkers are former migrants. In order to employ former migrants, however, agencies must have the commitment and resources to invest in training and capacity-building for individuals who may have tremendous knowledge of their community and ability to learn but who lack the formal skills necessary to pass qualification exams or meet hiring standards. Several county managers noted that they have tried to hire former migrants but that the required assessment exam is so difficult that it keeps otherwise qualified applicants from being considered.

## *Resentment, Discrimination, and Racism:*

Many communities in Minnesota resent the presence of migrant farmworkers. Migrants are perceived as being lazy and taking advantage of the system, and there is a lack of appreciation for the work they do. They are subject to discrimination, especially if they do not speak English. They feel they are discriminated against on all levels of life in Minnesota—the grocery store, government offices, employment, housing, and education.

One woman tells of how she realized that the owner of the only store in a small Minnesota town was taking advantage of migrants, by renting them videos for \$1 more than other people were charged. She saw an Anglo woman rent a video at the regular price, and then heard the store owner charge a migrant woman the elevated price. She was unable to say anything because she spoke no English, but the other woman spoke up and received a free video rental as a form of apology. There was no change in the policy, just a small compensation for one individual.

Migrants also report that social service providers act as though they are "giving funds from their own pockets" and provide the bare minimum possible rather than facilitating the full provision

of services. Human service workers in some counties tell migrant workers to come back the next day or in two days because they are "too busy," when it is highly likely that migrant workers would qualify for emergency services if allowed to complete an application. Within county human services there is often a bias against migrants. There is an attitude exhibited that they should not qualify for services even when the supervisor of a given office recognizes the need to serve people according to federal guidelines and need. This attitude is further exacerbated by a fundamental lack of cultural understanding.



## *Lack of Transportation or Time to Receive Services and Distance:*

Many service providers assume that "if they can get here from Texas, they can get to our office." This and similar statements show a lack of understanding about how migrant systems work. While some families own a vehicle (or multiple vehicles), they are shared among a number of people and are used to get to work in a given field. Some adult migrants do not have driver's licenses. Many prefer to take a family member with them on appointments. If someone needs the vehicle to go to a human service office, it often means others cannot get to or from work.

The situation is worse for individuals who do not have a vehicle or who live far from the nearest human service center. Many individuals travel to Minnesota with friends but later part ways to look for work. Their intent is to save enough during the season so they can buy a bus ticket back to their home state or pay someone to transport them.

Many families postpone attending to health or nutrition needs until inclement weather when they would miss work anyway. Appointments for WIC clinics or public benefits are inevitably during the day, and most migrant service agencies also maintain daytime hours. For this reason, migrants rush offices before the season begins hoping to set everything up before they start working. Once they are working, their ability to get to a service center depends on the willingness of their crew leader or factory manager, access to a car, or success in finding someone to interpret for them.

## *Lack of Legal Documentation:*

Most undocumented workers are aware that they are not eligible for government services and are wary about going to agencies associated with the government. Many travel with family or friends who do have documentation. While they cannot be served as part of a household by government standards, they often share resources with documented individuals. Several agencies, including Migrant Health, Migrant Education, and Migrant Legal Services provide services regardless of documentation. Food shelves and other emergency services (such as the Salvation Army) also provide services regardless of documentation. However, these agencies sometimes request social security numbers for tracking purposes or are accessible only by referral from agencies that do require a social security number, reducing the possibility that a person in need receives their services.



## *Differences Between Home-Based States and Minnesota:*

While federal programs (food stamps, WIC) are supposed to give equal benefits regardless of which state they are provided in, migrant farmworkers often perceive that there are differences between states. Some of this perception may come from the fact that the migrant family itself may change upon migration to Minnesota. Three nuclear family units of related individuals may combine to form one unit when they come to Texas. Very young children or children with permanent jobs in Texas may not join other members in coming to Minnesota. A single relative or friend may join the family unit during the agricultural season. These changes in family size and composition may affect benefits received, as well as the differences in income earned by work in Minnesota as compared to Texas. However, there is a perception that the differences are more fundamental. Migrants note that food stamps last longer in Texas due to lower food prices and that WIC clinics have different policies about voucher pick-up and class attendance. Another major difference is that many farmworkers are eligible to collect unemployment for work done in Texas, but in Minnesota farmwork is not an eligible type of work according to unemployment regulations.

Most migrant home-base states have a very large Chicano/Latino population. In the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, for example, all county workers are bilingual, not because it is a requirement for employment, but because the majority of the population (and resource pool) is of Mexican descent. Because the majority of service providers are of the same cultural background as the clients they serve, the issue of culturally appropriate service does not play as large a role as it does in Minnesota. However, Texas has fewer per capita resources than Minnesota and provides less services.

Medicaid coverage in Texas, for example, is limited to mothers and young (pre-adolescent) children. State employees often have case loads of 300 or more, so the potential for follow-up is limited. Migrant workers continue to be nutritionally vulnerable while in Texas. Many migrate within Texas to work in different agricultural crops.

Migrants must rely on emergency rooms for health care or make an appointment with a migrant clinic, sometimes waiting six or seven months after they make the appointment to be seen. It is clear that the needs of migrant farmworkers stretch across state lines, and that any effort to address their needs must involve collaboration between migrant receiving and sending states. Tri-Valley Opportunity Council has offices in McAllen and Eagle Pass, Texas, in order to provide follow-up on children who did not finish receiving health care services before they left Minnesota or who were identified as at-risk for health problems. This is a way to maintain contact with a population that is difficult to track.

In general, non-migrant agencies, including most governmental programs such as AFDC, food stamps, and Medical Assistance, are designed for a non-migrant population. Other agencies, such as food shelves and extension offices are accustomed to summer being a "down" time, and are not prepared to make the intense seasonal effort necessary to provide effective service delivery to migrant farmworkers. As one individual with a non-migrant agency noted, "Next time I would start to work with [the migrant agency] earlier. Once the season started, they kept telling me they would get back to me because they were very busy. By the time I stopped waiting for things to slow down, the migrants were all gone."



# Migrant Profiles

## The Cedillo Family

The Cedillos came to Glencoe, Minnesota, for the first time this year to work in a canning company after hearing a niece talk about her experiences over several years. All the members of the family came: Mr. and Mrs. Cedillo; their adult son; their daughter, her husband and infant; and their two children, ages 9 and 12. In Texas they share a small home. The Cedillos arrived in Minnesota June 19, 1995 and left September 16, 1995.

Originally from Reynosa, Mexico, the Cedillos lived in Chicago for 11 years and returned to Texas five years ago. The family has trouble finding good-paying work in Texas. Most of the well-paying jobs require at least a GED, which neither Mr. or Mrs. Cedillo have. Mrs. Cedillo is attending classes in hopes of getting her GED. She received secretarial training as a youth in Mexico, but has not used that training in a number of years. Mrs. Cedillo has become a citizen, and her children are all U.S. citizens by birth. Mr. Cedillo is classified as a Resident Alien. Mr. and Mrs. Cedillo prefer to speak Spanish, but their children are bilingual.

The Cedillos were able to secure work quickly when they arrived in Glencoe, Minnesota. They had a very hard time, however, finding housing. They first lived with another family and then rented a cockroach-infested trailer for \$350 per month. They tolerated the situation because they wanted to stay and work, and could not find a better alternative. The Cedillos felt the assistance available in Minnesota was excellent, but had trouble learning about what was available. For example, they were unaware of emergency assistance that might have helped them with first month's rent.

They faced discrimination in applying for housing, often being told to come back day after day rather than an outright refusal. Their initial lack of housing caused problems when they applied for food stamps as well, because the county office demanded an address before providing services. The intake worker did not inform them that a post office box address is sufficient to establish residency. Mrs. Cedillo feels the lack of livable housing for families is a big problem in Minnesota. She learned that parts of California provide family housing with kitchens and bedrooms. The Seneca camp they worked for provides only separate housing for men and women and for adults only.

The Cedillos worked alternating shifts in the canning company so that someone was available to watch the children. Mrs. Cedillo estimates that the adults earned an average of \$4,000 each over the summer, and would be able to take half of that back to Texas. Some earned more than others. Their son, for example, operated a fork lift and earned more. Mrs. Cedillo liked the title of her position, "Final Inspector," at the canning company, noting that it sounded more dignified than the usual description she has to put on employment forms such as "picking and loading cucumbers," which is some of the work she does in Texas.



*The Cedillo family in their Mission, Texas home.*



While in Minnesota the Cedillo's sent their grandchild to the Migrant Head Start program. The older children had to stay home, however, because there is no education program for older children in Glencoe. Upon arriving, the family received a food voucher and gasoline from MFET, WIC assistance for the grandchild, and Food Stamps for part of June until work started. The pea pack went slowly and there was a four day break without work between the pea and corn pack, or canning session. However, the corn pack was steady, and the family was able to save some of the money it had hoped for.

The Cedillos were unable to take advantage of the Migrant Health Services mobile unit the few days it visited Glencoe due to the hours they were working. Because the unit was located far from the factory and the Cedillos worked opposite twelve hour shifts at the factory, a car was seldom available for those not at work.

The Cedillos estimate that they spend \$100 per week on groceries in Texas, but \$150 in Minnesota. Mrs. Cedillo said she spends a lot of time looking for coupons when she is in Minnesota, and always takes advantage of the coupons for free items. She brought pasta, chilies, spices, tomatoes, and the stock of canned goods she had to Minnesota. They have been back in Texas a short while, but have spent some of the money they made in Minnesota to fumigate termites that infested their home and lawn while they were gone and to repaint the walls.

The Cedillos are eligible to collect unemployment for the work they did in Minnesota. The Unemployment Office helps them find periodic agricultural work in Texas. While in Texas, the Cedillos will work in part-time jobs. At the time of this interview they were waiting to hear about work in the cotton gins, which would pay \$340/week for roughly 10 weeks. None of the Cedillos file Federal or State income tax even though they would likely qualify for refunds. They were unaware that they would probably be eligible for a tax refund, and were unfamiliar with Minnesota's property tax refund for renters.

Mrs. Cedillo noted that migrating is hard on the children because school starts in mid-August in Texas (before the migrant season is over), but doesn't begin in Minnesota until just before migrant families leave. Her eleven-year-old son tried out for a sports team, but ended up dropping out because the other children were so far ahead in their training. Mr. and Mrs. Cedillo recognize the importance of education, and hope to make sure their younger children get finish high school and attend college. They still hope their oldest son will attend college but he is hesitant, preferring for now to focus on obtaining work where he can to help his family. Mrs. Cedillo hopes to get her driver's license, which will make it easier for her to go to classes and earn her GED to lay the foundation for a more stable future.

## The Esqueda-Osunas

Jose Refugio Osuna and Adela Esqueda have been traveling for the past four years to the Clara City area of Minnesota to work in sugar beet fields. Originally from Mexico, they have been married 38 years. They have ten children and 27 grandchildren. This year eight children and 17 grandchildren accompanied them to Minnesota. For several of these children, this was their first season in Minnesota. A local priest, who does outreach to the migrant community and serves Spanish mass throughout the summer, blessed their cars to try and guard against the car repairs that could wipe out much of the summer's savings. If all went well, the family would arrive in Texas in two to three days.

This was a fair season for the family. During the summer each of the adults was able to earn close to \$2,000, considerably more than they could have earned picking vegetables in Texas where work pays less and is less steady. Each season's earnings are different. "Sometimes we make money, sometimes we don't," stated Mr. Osuna. "It all depends."

One of his sons and his son's family had not received food stamps, and was thus not able to save much this year. This, combined with the discrimination he felt when applying for services, was enough to make him say he will not return to Minnesota. As another family member asserted, "Some years we only make enough to make our payments in Texas and buy groceries."

In Texas, each family unit within the extended family has its own home. In Minnesota each family unit has one small room with several bunk beds, a stove, a sink, and a refrigerator. There is no separate area for preparing food or washing dishes, and only one of the rooms has a refrigerator that works well. The Esqueda-Osunas tolerate the situation because they know it is temporary, and hope to earn money that will secure a more stable future for their children.

All members of the family are either residents of the United States or U.S. citizens. The second and third generations are bilingual, and accompany their parents to social service appointments in order to provide translation. Children in the family attended the Migrant Education program and enjoyed it. Several of the couples with young children received WIC assistance, and felt it was a big help, especially since it is easy to transfer certification from Texas to Minnesota.

Like many other families, the Esqueda-Osunas bring food items with them from Texas to help make it through the first part of the summer. This year they brought flour, beans, tortilla mix (maseca), as well as household items such as laundry soap and toothpaste, which are less expensive in Texas than Minnesota. Each family cooks its own meals, but resources are shared when necessary. Everyone agrees that "beans are never lacking." Meals center around beans, potatoes, corn and flour tortillas, eggs and meat, along with some less traditional foods.



*The Esqueda-Osuna family in their Clara City, Minnesota home.*

MIGRANT  
PROFILES



Three of the four smaller households received a full allotment of food stamps in July and a lesser amount in August. Because food stamp allotments are based on projected earnings, they often fall short of covering the family's need if the weather is worse than expected and they cannot work. The family dislikes applying for social services. They feel that financial workers do not want to help people, especially people of Mexican descent, and try to discourage them from applying.

The Esqueda-Osunas feel that the biggest assistance they receive in Minnesota is the house their farmer provides. They did not have to pay rent or utilities, and could leave some belongings for future use. Nonetheless, when asked what they most miss about Texas while in Minnesota, family members unanimously answered "our house." When in Texas, they miss the opportunity to work and earn money in Minnesota.

The work they do in Texas varies from working in vegetable packing houses to working in a convenience store or in construction. Whatever the work, it is not secure, does not pay very well, and often involves traveling long distances within Texas. While in Minnesota the Esqueda-Osunas work to improve their family's future and to provide a good home for their children in Texas.



## The Sanchez Family

Originally from Nuevo Leon, Mexico, Mr. and Mrs. Sanchez received U.S. residency and permission to work ten years ago. The Sanchezes live in Pharr, Texas, with their extended family. The crops they have worked in include asparagus in Indiana, strawberries in Michigan, apples in Idaho. This is the Sanchez family's second year in Minnesota. They are working at a vegetable farm within the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area.

They arrived here in May and will stay through November picking and packaging potatoes, carrots, and radishes. At the truck farm where they work women earn \$4.50 an hour packing radishes. They work from 8:00 or 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with a 15 minute lunch break. Men work until 6:30 or 7:00 p.m. in the evening and receive between \$4 and \$5 per hour depending on the work they do in carrot and potato fields. If they work more than 48 hours a week, they receive time and a half for their work.

The farmer they work for provides free housing, furniture, heat, and free or low-cost vegetables to his workers. He planted several rows of chili plants for the workers' consumption. However, there was no work to be done during the first three weeks the Sanchezes were in Minnesota, and their employer was reluctant to fill out forms so the workers could get food stamps to carry them through to their first pay check.

The two-bedroom unit (with a full kitchen and two refrigerators) is a temporary home for Mr. and Mrs. Sanchez, their children, and grandchildren (12 people in all). Although quarters are cramped, the family feels lucky to have decent housing provided by the grower. They feel it is adequate in comparison with the housing they once had in Indiana—a flimsy wood structure with just two small burners to cook on, portable toilets, and communal showers.

Last year the Sanchezes worked in Blooming Prairie, Minnesota, at Owatonna Canning Company. They preferred the conditions in Blooming Prairie because child care was available through Head Start for their young children and because Migrant Legal Services, Migrant Health Services, and the local food shelf—all with bilingual staff—were housed in one building close to the camp. This year several of the women have not been able to work because they lack child care. They noted that no migrant agencies have visited the camp to do outreach this summer. They were unaware that Migrant Health and Migrant Legal Services have toll-free phone numbers, or of the existence of Midwest Farmworker Employment and Training and Migrant Legal Services offices in Saint Paul.

The Sanchezes do their best to make food resources stretch. They brought onions, beans, lard, flour, pasta, rice and salt with them from Texas. The family eats less meat, fruit, tomatoes, bananas and milk in Minnesota because these items are especially expensive. They have trouble finding some culturally appropriate ingredients, especially spices and chilies, where they live. They sometimes go to a Mexican food store in Saint Paul or ask someone else who is going to bring them needed food items.

## MIGRANT PROFILES

Male members of the Sanchez Family.



## MIGRANT PROFILES

Each nuclear family in the Sanchez household does its own cooking and maintains its own finances, but they help each other when necessary. The Sanchez's daughter-in-law, Marisela, told us about her family's experience. She, her husband Edmundo II, and their two children, Edith and Edmundo III, share one of the bedrooms in the apartment. The couple had saved \$100 to bring with them from Texas, but work did not start until three weeks after the family arrived in Anoka. With two young children to feed, their resources went fast. Marisela interpreted for her mother-in-law at the county human service office and applied on behalf of her family. Marisela and Edmundo's family did not qualify for AFDC because of their anticipated wages, but they did receive food stamps until work began, as well as Medicaid for their children. Edmundo's parents were denied assistance because their assets in Texas were counted.

When in Texas, Edmundo and Marisela work on various agricultural tasks. In a good month Edmundo can earn \$800 picking onions. But work is sporadic, and employers use the same workers year after year, so it is hard to find work if you aren't already contracted. A more typical month's income for the family is roughly \$600 between wages and unemployment benefits they are eligible to collect. Food Stamps and WIC vouchers help the family get by. Although they file federal income taxes, the Sanchezes have never filed state income taxes since the state forms are not readily available to them in Texas. As their daughter Edith reaches kindergarten age, the couple worries about her education and do not want her to miss part of the school year due to their travel. They have seen how migrant children struggle to make up lost school time and to keep up with their classmates, and how difficult it is for them to stay in school. Marisela and Edmundo are making payments on a small piece of land in Texas. They hope some day to own a house, like Edmundo's parents, and to find stable employment in Texas so they don't have to migrate to make ends meet.

*Female members of the Sanchez Family.*



# Recommendations

One of the best ways to improve the nutritional and health status of migrant farmworkers is to provide steady work and much higher wages. Under recent economic conditions, however, wages have been stagnant or falling. Given these economic realities, public and private assistance programs are absolutely essential to meet the nutritional and health needs of migrant workers and their families. The following recommendations are designed to make this system as effective and efficient as possible.



## Federal:

- Medicaid certification should be easily and readily transferable between states, as is WIC certification. Currently, applicants must wait several months to find out if they are eligible in Minnesota, even if they have qualified for Medicaid in their home state. Eligibility for Medicaid varies between states, and Minnesota's eligibility standards are more generous than those of most migrant home-base states. Minnesota eligibility should be automatically extended to those with current eligibility in their home-base state.
- Food stamps should not be block granted. However, if such is the case, there should be considerations for migrant farmworkers such as the exclusion of the value of a homestead owned in Texas and exclusion of the value of the first vehicle if it is used for self-employment (including contract sugar beet work) when benefits are calculated.
- Legal Aid programs, including Migrant Legal Services, should be allowed to continue client education components, lobbying on behalf of their clientele, filing of class action law suits, and the representation of individuals regardless of their documentation status. Pending legislation attempts to limit these activities, severely curtailing the ability of Legal Aid Programs to represent those most in need.
- There should be recognition and support for ongoing health services targeted toward migrant communities that are preventive and cross state lines. Forums and funding that allow for the development of interstate referral networks and resource sharing, especially among migrant clinics and local health centers, should be provided.
- Homelessness and migratory status should be considered high-priority nutrition risks for purposes of WIC certification.
- The definition of migrant worker should be standardized by all agencies serving migrants to assure that those most in need have priority in receiving services.

## State:

- The state should encourage the advancement of former migrants to work in clinical settings and the integration of farmworkers into health professions, particularly nutrition education, by offering incentives for training programs that include migrant farmworkers. The development of peer-education on nutrition within the community should be encouraged.
- Extension programs and the Expanded Food and Nutrition program should work with Migrant Health Services to develop a resource library of background information on migrant nutritional issues and culturally appropriate educational tools for use by direct service staff.
- The Minnesota Extension Service, in collaboration with Migrant Health Services, WIC and certified dietitians, should establish a committee to review nutritional materials for cultural appropriateness and accurate translation.
- The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA), in conjunction with the Spanish Speaking Affairs Council, Department of Human Services (DHS) and migrant service agencies should establish a work group on migrant housing and develop a statewide strategy for increasing migrant housing.
- Nutrition education should build on positive aspects of the traditional migrant diet and incorporate strategies for making food choices that are both economically and nutritionally sound.

## Department of Human Services:

- Funds should be set aside for use by migrant agencies to analyze and publish baseline health and socioeconomic data regarding the migrant farmworker community in Minnesota.
- Any outreach effort made by DHS should designate resources for use in expanding outreach to migrant farmworkers.
- Emergency assistance should be provided to migrant farmworkers on a one-time per migrant season or calendar-year basis rather than one-time per twelve months as is done currently. This would better fit the needs of the migrant population. For example, a migrant family that needed emergency assistance in August of this year because of a poor harvest would still be eligible if they need it for help with housing in May of next year. Migrants would not receive emergency assistance more frequently than other populations, but would receive it on a time line more appropriate for their needs.
- The Department of Human Services' annual training for counties serving migrant farmworkers should include: 1) informational presentations by representatives of the major migrant service agencies to increase appropriate referrals; and 2) training by migrant advocates on ways to more effectively serve the migrant population.
- The Department of Human Services should revise the Combined Application form used to apply for state and county services to include a question asking specifically if an applicant is without food or shelter rather than asking if they have "some other emergency," as it currently reads. The present language is unclear and unlikely to be understood by migrant workers with limited English skills.



- The Department of Human Services should issue a protocol of standards on processing migrants both generally and for "emergencies". It should revise and re-issue Informational and Instructional Bulletins 87-8A-B.
- The Department of Human Services should establish standards for determining when interpreters/translators should be used and the minimum qualifications they must possess. As part of these standards, each person applying for county services should be asked if he/she is in need of an interpreter, even if accompanied by an individual who appears to be capable of interpreting. Compliance with these standards should be part of individual staff and county evaluations. These standards should eliminate the use of minor children or individuals with very limited English as interpreters and allow for interpretation on the same day it is requested. Written materials should be reviewed by at least two individuals, one with knowledge of the migrant community and the other with certified Spanish skills, for consistency and accuracy of translation.
- The Minnesota Department of Human Services should provide all commonly used county human service forms and instruction booklets in Spanish and revise the Spanish versions at the same time the English originals are revised.
- Minnesota counties with migrant populations should have readily available Spanish forms and application instructions from the Department of Human Services in sufficient supply to meet demand. Counties should be evaluated on the extent to which they supply these materials to their applicants.
- The Minnesota Department of Human Services, in conjunction with Migrant Legal Services, should develop an outline of participant rights and responsibilities in Spanish and English for distribution to migrant workers applying for county services.



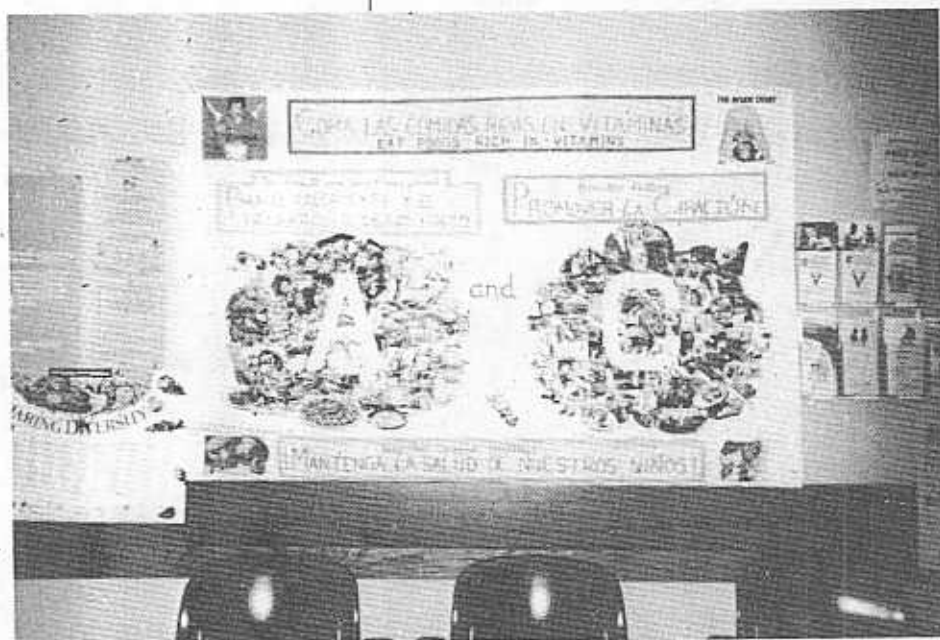
## Non-Governmental Organizations:

- Food Banks should make culturally appropriate food staples available to food shelves in all parts of Minnesota. The list on page 32 identifies these items.
- The Minnesota Food Shelf Association, in collaboration with Migrant Education programs, should compile a statewide list of culturally appropriate commercial food suppliers for use by food shelves.
- The Minnesota Food Shelf Association should undertake the education of local food shelves and food shelf boards in areas where migrants are/should be served.
- All food shelves that serve the migrant community should provide culturally appropriate staples as part of their food packages: Efforts should be made to provide foods that are both difficult to acquire and currently lacking in typical migrant diets such as cheese and fresh vegetables.
- Food shelves should not ask for social security numbers as a tracking mechanism, and should inform clients verbally and post written signs noting that social security numbers are not a requirement for services. The combination of full names and birth dates should be used instead.
- Migrant workers or recently settled migrant workers identified with the help of migrant service agencies should be actively involved in the planning and evaluation of nutrition services provided to the migrant community. These services should include an outreach strategy conducted in Spanish designed specifically to provide migrant workers with information about available food resources.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Migrant Health Services, Inc. should identify a specific model for nutritional outreach to the migrant community and share it with other agencies providing nutrition services.
- All agencies should meet in the off-season to inform each other of changes in service guidelines and plan coordination of services, including nutrition-related referrals.
- All agencies should meet annually on the local level with other community services including food shelves, Community Action Programs and County Human Services representatives to share information about their programs and establish a referral system.
- Migrant Education Nutritionists and Migrant Health Services, Inc. should establish agreements with local nutrition providers (County WIC staff, Public Health Nursing Services and Extension Service staff) to raise awareness of available services and avoid duplication of services.
- Funds should be set aside to hire seasonal advocates to educate migrants about programs and assist them in obtaining services.

Bulletin board at County Human Services office in southern Minnesota.



## Appendix 1:

### Migrant Service Agencies Information for Main offices in Minnesota

Midwest Farmworker Employment and Training, Inc.  
1311 2nd St. North  
Sauk Rapids, MN 56379  
(612) 253-7010

Migrant Health Service, Inc.  
Townsite Centre  
810 4th Ave. South  
Moorhead, MN 56560  
(800) 842-8693 or (218) 236-6502

Minnesota Department of Economic Security  
390 No. Robert Street  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
(612) 296-8764

Migrant Legal Services  
700 Minnesota Building  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
(612) 291-2837  
(800) 652-9733 (clients only)

Minnesota Department of Human Services  
Assistance Payment Division  
444 Lafayette Road  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
(612) 296-0978

Minnesota Department of Education  
Migrant Education Unit  
802 Capital Square Building  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
(612) 296-0324

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council  
Migrant Child and Family Services  
102 North Broadway, PO Box 607  
Crookston, MN 56716  
(218) 281-5832 or (800) 584-7020



APPENDICES

## Appendix 2:

### Important Components of Chicano/Latino Culture

#### Respeto

Respeto is the respect that one shows for others, especially elders and persons in positions of authority. Education is highly respected in Chicano/Latino culture, whether it be provided by a learning institution or by life itself. Chicano/Latino children are taught very early not to contradict teachers or adults, and to show respect for those in positions of authority by not questioning their decisions. It is this same respeto that sometimes keeps migrant families from requesting services they badly need. They often wait for them to be offered, because questioning a professional's judgment would be a sign of disrespect. One migrant woman interviewed for this study mentioned that she felt a decision made by a county financial worker was different than that made in other similar cases, but she did not question the decision. As she put it, "It would be like telling a doctor that my child has a fever. He would say, who are you to say what your child does or does not have." Human service providers must not assume that migrant workers will ask questions if they have doubts, but rather provide a clear opening for those doubts to be expressed.

#### Machismo and Dignidad

The translation of this term to "macho" in English does not reflect its true meaning. In Chicano/Latino culture, the macho is the person who provides for his family, who puts the family's wellbeing ahead of all else, and gains his value from his ability to provide. When a Chicano/Latino male is not able to fulfill this role, regardless of the reason, he may take it as a personal failure. This embarrassment is why Chicano/Latino women, rather than their husbands, often take the lead in applying for human services.

Dignidad is a similar concept, the dignity and honor of the Chicano/Latino family. This dynamic must be understood by service providers and not aggravated by offhand comments or accusations. One migrant advocate described a situation she witnessed in which a county employee told a man in front of his family that it was his fault they could not receive services because he had quit his last job. The same information could have been passed on in a more respectful form allowing the man to keep his dignity.

#### Personalismo

Personalismo is the value that is given to each individual, and the recognition that each of us has worth, valid experiences, and knowledge. This value is violated when people are treated as numbers and cases rather than individuals. In Chicano/Latino culture a personal greeting or "saludo" is exchanged each time two people see one another with a handshake or, among friends, a hug. When this element is lacking, people feel slighted, like second-class citizens. Yet this personal aspect is often bypassed in the name of more efficient service provision. Human service providers can gain the respect and trust of migrant families by simply treating them as humans, greeting them each time they meet in a warm or respectful way.



## Appendix 3:

### Nutrition Resources:

Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs. *Farmworker Nutrition Education Resource Guide*. Arlington, 1993. Available from: Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs, 1611 N. Kent St., Suite 910, Arlington: VA 22209, phone: (703) 528-4141.

Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs. *A Taste of English*. Nutrition workbook for Adult ESL Students and Teacher's manual. Arlington: 1994. Available from: Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs, 1611 N. Kent St., Suite 910, Arlington, VA 22209, phone: (703) 528-4141.

The Growers of Washington State Apples. *Healthy Choices for Kids Classroom Cookbook*. Wenatchee: 1993. Available From: The Growers of Washington State Apples, P.O. Box 550, Wenatchee, WA 98807, phone: (509) 663-9600.

Julian Samora Research Institute  
Michigan State University  
112 Paolucci Building  
East Lansing, MI 48824-1110  
(517) 432-1317, Fax (517) 432-2221

Migrant Clinicians Network, Inc.  
5524 Bee Caves Road  
Building I, Suite 1  
Austin, TX 78746  
(512) 327-2017, Fax (512) 327-0719

National Migrant Resource Program, Inc.  
1515 Cap. of Texas Hwy., S., Ste. 220  
Austin, TX 78746  
(512) 328-7682, Fax (512) 328-8559

Padres Hispanos en Acción Por una Sana Generación. *Nutrition Education for Parents*. Alexandria: 1994. Nutrition Calendar. Copies available from: Head Start Publications Center, P.O. Box 26417, Alexandria, VA 22313-0417.

Pat Campbell, Ed. *Para los Niños: A Book of Healthy Recipes*. Crookston: Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, 1994.

Pyramid Packet. University Park: Penn State Nutrition Center, 1993.  
St. Paul-Ramsey County Nutrition Program Nutrition/WIC  
1954 University Avenue, Suite 12  
Saint Paul, MN 55104  
(612) 292-7000.

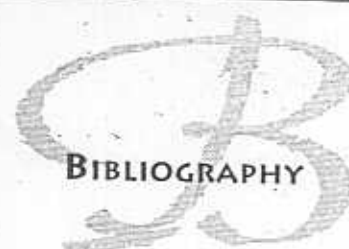
### Resource for culturally appropriate materials and materials in Spanish:

U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. *Guide for Developing Nutrition Services in Community Health Programs*. Rockville, 1978. Available from: National Clearinghouse for Primary Care Information 8201 Greensboro Drive, Suite 600, McLean, VA 22102, phone: (703) 821-8955.



APPENDICES

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Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs. *Highlights of Focus Group Interview Findings: National ESL/Nutrition Outreach Project*. Arlington: 1993.

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Brieger, Katherine, Moderator. *Review of Farmworker Access to Nutrition Programs: Planning for the Future*. Conference Panel, 1993.

Compean, Mario C. *La Cara Humana de la Pobreza: Los Niños Chicanos-Latinos en Minnesota*. [The Human Face of Poverty: Chicano-Latino Children in Minnesota]. St. Paul: Chicano/Latino Advocacy and Community Empowerment Through Research (HACER), 1995.

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Gwynn, Eunice R. *Dietary Practices Among Hispanic Farmworkers of Mexican Descent*. Conference Presentation: 1993.

Hennepin County Office of Planning and Development. *Report of the Task Force on Interpretive Services for the Hennepin County Board*. Minneapolis: 1992.

*Hidden Treasures, Hidden Lives: New Hispanic Immigrants in Minnesota*. St. Paul: The Urban Coalition and Sin Fronteras, 1992.

Martin, Philip L., and Martin, David A. *The Endless Quest: Helping America's Farm Workers*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1995.

*Minnesota Latino Needs and Resource Assessment*. St. Paul: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1995.

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Runyan, Donna H., and Morgan, Patti C. *Nutrition and Migrant Health: Trends in Nutrition Services at Migrant Health Centers*. Washington: Georgetown University Child Development Center, 1987.

Samardick, Ruth. *The National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS): Recent Findings Relevant to Policy Development and Program Planning and Evaluation*. Presentation to the Interagency Committee on Migrants. Washington: U.S. Department of Labor, 1995.

Sills, Erin O.; Alwang, Jeffrey; Driscoll, Paul. *Migrant Farm Workers on Virginia's Eastern Shore: An Analysis of Economic Impacts*. *Jr. Agr. and Applied Econl* 26(1), July 1994: 209-223.

Valdes, Dennis N. *Al Norte: Agricultural Workers in the Great Lakes Region, 1917-1970*. Austin: University of Texas UP, 1991.

# Migrant Service Agencies Summary

Agency	Government Department	Major Services	Nutrition Component	Guidelines	Strengths	Barriers/ Limitations
Migrant Health Services Inc.	Health & Human Services (HHS)	Physician Referral, Prenatal Care, Dental Care, Vision Referrals, Health Education, WIC	Health Education WIC clinics Health Screening Child & Teen Check-ups	Income Migratory or Seasonal Worker Travel to a Work Area	Culturally Appropriate Nutrition Education Bilingual Staff	Few Sites in S. MN Few Evening Clinics Lack of Providers Limited Follow-up
Tri-Valley Opportunity Council	HHS	Head Start Day Care	Nurses & Nutrition Consultants Nutrition Curriculum Health Screening Meals Provided Parent Education	Infant to 5 years Family Migration in Past 24 Mos. for Agriculture	Offices in Texas for Follow-up Bilingual Staff Family Service Workers Provide Valuable Coordination	Limited Service Time
Title I Migrant Education	Education	Primary & Secondary Education Graduation Preparation	Nurses Health Screening Record Transfer Meals Provided Nutrition Education Advocacy	Ages 3-21 Family Migration in past 36 Mos. for Agriculture Need for Remedial Education & Health Services	Nutritionally Adequate Meals Nursing and Screening Services	Limited to 7 Weeks Food Served Not Culturally Appropriate
Midwest Farmworker Employment & Training	Labor/ HHS	Job Training & Placement, Emergency Services	Emergency Food Vouchers Referral	Income Guidelines JTPA/CSBG Definition of Migrant, Seasonal US Citizen, Resident, Work Permit	Bilingual Staff Same-day Nutritional Assistance	Priority on Job Development Emergency Assistance is One Time per Season
Migrant Legal Services	LSC	Legal Services	Public Benefits Appeals Wage Claims Referrals	Current Migrant & Seasonal Farmworkers, Income Guidelines	Client Education	Limited staff

# General Nutrition Provision Agencies

Program	Government Department	Major Services	Nutrition Component	Guidelines	Strengths	Barriers / Limitations
Women Infant & Children (WIC)	USDA	Food Vouchers Nutrition Assessments Referrals	Food Vouchers Nutrition Education/ Assessment	Nutritional Risk Pregnant or Lactating Children to age 5	Certification Easily Transferred	Education Culturally, Linguistically Inadequate
Food Stamps	USDA	Food Vouchers Referrals	Food Vouchers	Income and Asset Guidelines US Citizen8 / Resident County Residence	Some Migrant Considerations	Lack Interpreters, Translated Materials Cumbersome Application Prospective Budgeting Discrimination
Food Shelves	Private	Referrals	Food Packages	Residence in County	Emergency Assistance Simple Application Process	Referrals Required Request of Social Security Numbers Food Not Culturally Appropriate Lack of Resources
County Extension	USDA	Education and Training	Food Preparation, Budgeting	Residence in County	Teach Skills Valued, Needed by Farmworkers No cost Flexible Format	Few Efforts to Reach Farmworkers Lack of Knowledge about Farmworkers Culturally Inappropriate
Public Health Nursing	HHS	Child and Teen Checkups	Referrals	Age	Free or MA Reimbursement	Lack of Bilingual Staff Often low Profile



# Recent Publications

## Reports

*Poverty and Voter Turnout in the 1992 Election*, June 1994 – Free

*The Well-Being of American Indian Children in Minnesota: Economic Conditions*, May 1994 – Free

*The Food Stamp Program in Minnesota: Barriers to Participation and Outreach Strategies*, March 1994 – \$5.00

*Resiliency and Risk Among Young People of Color*, March 1994 – Free

*Profiles of Change: Communities of Color in the Twin Cities Area*, August 1993 – \$5.00

*Minnesota County Poverty and Housing Statistics, 1980-1990*, September 1992 – \$5.00

*Hidden Dreams, Hidden Lives: New Hispanic Immigrants in Minnesota*, September 1992 – \$5.00

*Race, Prejudice and Health Care: The Lessons of the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment, and Critical Condition: African Americans in the Health Care System*, a summary of two health care conferences held in June 1991 and March 1992 [co-sponsored with the Illusion Theater and the Center for Biomedical Ethics at the University of Minnesota] – Free

*Hunger Hurts: How Government and the Economy Are Failing Minnesota Families*, February 1991 – \$5.00

*Hunger Still Hurts: A Statewide Survey of Emergency Food Assistance Program Clients*, February 1996 – \$5.00

*Bitter Sugar: Migrant Farmworker Access to Food and Nutrition Programs in Minnesota*, January 1996 – \$5.00

*Prenatal Care Among Hispanic Women in St. Paul*, February 1991 – \$5.00

*The Next Generation: The Health and Well-Being of Young People of Color in the Twin Cities*, January, 1990, reprinted October 1992 – \$5.00

*Empty Promises: Childhood Hunger in Hennepin County and the Challenge to Public Policy*, January 1990 – \$5.00

## Series and Newsletters

*Minnesota Food Shelf Use* (an annual report, 1986 to present) – Free

*Information for Change* (quarterly newsletter of the Urban Coalition Community Information Clearinghouse) – Free



The  
Urban  
Coalition

2610 University Avenue West  
Suite 201  
St. Paul, MN 55114  
(612) 348-8550  
Fax (612) 348-2533

This initiative was  
a joint effort of the  
Minnesota Food Shelf  
Association, the  
State of Minnesota  
Spanish Speaking  
Affairs Council and  
the Urban Coalition.

## Minnesota Food Shelf Association

The Minnesota Food Shelf Association is a state-wide association of food shelves whose mission is to provide grants to food shelves, to advocate on behalf of food shelves and their clients and to educate the public about hunger in Minnesota.

The Minnesota Food Shelf Association  
4025 West Broadway, Suite 203  
Robbinsdale, MN 55422  
(612) 536-9180  
(800) 782-6372  
FAX: (612) 536-5455

## The State of Minnesota Spanish Speaking Affairs Council

The State of Minnesota Spanish Speaking Affairs Council is a state agency which focuses on public policy and advocacy relevant to issues that affect the Chicano/Latino community throughout the state of Minnesota. Its primary mission is to promote the social, economic, and political development of Minnesota's Chicano/Latino community.

The State of Minnesota Spanish Speaking Affairs Council  
Department of Administration, G-4  
50 Sherburne Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55155-1402  
(612) 296-9587  
FAX: (612) 297-1297

## The Urban Coalition

Founded in 1968, the Urban Coalition is a non-profit organization that pursues its mission through research, public policy, technical assistance, advocacy and capacity-building. In recent years, the Coalition has focused on education, employment, food and hunger, health, and issues of race, although it may become involved in other issues as invited, or as they arise. In the spirit of true collaboration, the Coalition is involved in multiple collaborative efforts with other organizations and key stakeholders in our community.

The Urban Coalition  
2610 University Avenue West, Suite 201  
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(612) 348-8550  
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