



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The SC Commission for Minority Affairs' Hispanic/Latino Affairs Division has launched the COVID-19 Action Plan for Agricultural Workers and Latinos Living in Rural SC

The SC Commission for Minority Affairs' Hispanic/Latino Affairs Division has launched the COVID-19 Action Plan for Agricultural Workers and Latinos Living in Rural SC. This action plan calls for collaborative efforts among state agencies, organizations, services providers, and community leaders/brokers to ensure COVID-19 information, materials, testing and vaccinations effectively reach this segment of the population.

The SC Department of Employment and Workforce's Agricultural Outreach Plan projects the agricultural workforce need for South Carolina at approximately 12,750 workers. This total includes approximately 6,300 migrant and seasonal farm workers and 6,270 H-2A visa holders. The peak season is from April to September.

The fastest growing segment of many rural communities in South Carolina is the Hispanic population. According to the US Census data, the estimated number of Latinos living in rural areas is 23,395. There are 16 SC Counties that meet the three definitions used by the Federal Government to define Rural: Hampton, Colleton, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Orangeburg, Clarendon, Williamsburg, Marion, Dillon, Marlboro, Chesterfield, Lee, McCormick, Abbeville, Newberry, Cherokee, and Oconee.

The COVID-19 pandemic has unveiled and intensified severe and pervasive health inequities among minority communities. Agricultural workers and individuals living in rural areas face challenges and barriers in accessing health and social services. Issues of trust and immigration-related fears add stress to the already complex interactions in a health care system that is not prepared to effectively meet the language, cultural, or navigation barriers experienced by this population.

Addressing the needs of agricultural workers and Latinos living in South Carolina during this pandemic is both a moral imperative and pragmatic strategy. Our action plan includes activities designed to ensure information, testing and vaccines reach this segment of the population despite foreseen barriers and difficulties. Our action plan is constantly adapting and includes the following activities:

COVID-19 Action Plan for Agricultural Worker and Latinos Living in Rural SC

- Strengthen the working relationship with the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control, SC Department of Employment and Workforce, South Carolina Department of Education Migrant Education Program, SC Department of Agriculture and other state agencies entrusted with providing information and resources to agricultural workers and Latinos living in rural areas.
- Assisting state agencies and service providers to develop culturally and linguistically appropriate materials and resources to reach out to this specific segment of our population.
- Furthering collaborative efforts with state agencies, organizations, coalitions, Latino media and individuals assisting the agricultural worker community and Latinos in rural South Carolina to foster coordinated outreach efforts and sharing of information and resources.
- Fostering the participation of faith-based leaders/organizations in all activities related to keeping this community informed and aware of services and opportunities to receive information, testing and/or vaccination.
- Establishing effective communication channels for community leaders/brokers, organizations and agencies to provide feedback regarding specific needs from the community they serve and to establish additional needed items for the action plan.
- Offering cultural sensitivity training to state agencies, service providers and organizations in working with the agricultural worker community.
- Influencing State Government and decision makers to ensure adequate materials and vaccines are available for this segment of the population.

If you are a service provider interested in joining the COVID19 Action Plan for Agricultural Worker and Latinos Living in Rural SC, please visit our website and enter your information on our COVID19 Statewide Workgroup for Latinx and Immigrant Communities directory. Make sure to select you are providing services to farmworkers and/or in rural areas. You can also contact Ivan Segura, Program Manager at 803-995-8518 or isegura@cma.sc.gov

For more information about the SC Commission for Minority Affairs' Hispanic/Latino Affairs Division, please visit CMA.SC.GOV.

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ABOUT THE S.C. COMMISSION FOR MINORITY AFFAIRS

The South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs is the official South Carolina state agency bridging the gap between our ethnic minority communities. The Commission's mission is to be a catalyst that identifies and examines emerging issues and trends by providing constructive solutions and approaches to support the policy and socio- economic development of ethnic minority communities. For more information, visit our website at www.cma.sc.gov.