
Purpose

Services for migrant farmworkers and their families

Definition of Migrant Farmworker

A Migrant Farmworker means "an individual whose principal employment is in agriculture on a seasonal basis, who has been so employed within the last 24 months, and who establishes, for the purposes of such employment, a temporary abode".

- Family members of migrant farmworkers are included in the definition and should be processed according to all procedures which reference migrant farmworkers.
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Principle Employment Definition

Principal employment means over 50 percent of the migrant farmworker's job is in agriculture.

Agriculture Definition

Agriculture means farming in all its branches, including:

- Cultivation and tillage of the soil;
 - The production, cultivation, growing, and harvesting of any commodity grown in or on the land, or as an adjunct to or part of a commodity grown in or on the land;
 - Any practice (including preparation and processing for market and delivery to storage or to market or to carriers for transportation to market) performed by a farmer, on a farm, incident to or in conjunction with an activity described above.
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Temporary Abode Definition

A worker has established a temporary abode when the worker's job location requires him to leave his place of regular residence periodically, but not permanently. The time period away from the regular residence must be for one or more 24-hour periods. An automobile, van or camper may be considered temporary abode when used for temporary residence.

**Length of Time
Client Considered a
Migrant**

Up to 24 months after obtaining fixed employment. The two year settling out period is due to the belief that the barriers to participation in local health services, including WIC, are not immediately overcome when a participant leaves the migrant stream. The isolation caused by precarious employment, economic situations and the absence of English-speaking abilities necessitate a period of time when migrants begin to assimilate into the local community. During this time, special assistance is needed to seek out health care providers and local resources.

**Cultural/Economic/
Social Considerations**

Migrants frequently encounter sparse food preparation facilities where they live; for example, they may lack refrigeration, a sanitary water supply, or a stove.

Migrants experience transient lifestyles and the possibility of language barriers.

When travelling up the migrant stream most families travel with a large group consisting of immediate family and many times extended family also. These family "groups" usually live together during the growing season.

The premium placed on not losing a day's pay by migrant's mean that adults will frequently not seek outside help for anything less than absolute collapse or crisis. In contrast, however, most children's illnesses, especially if considered serious, will be taken care of quickly, even if it means loss of pay for one of the adults taking the child to the clinic. Every effort should be made to allow migrants to apply and pick up benefits without loss of work time.

Many farmworkers carry with them some home remedies, first-aid kits, and over-the-counter drugs to take care of minor problems. Many OTC drugs should be considered folk medicines, since they are used in ways for which they were not intended. Most of these will be used prior to the person seeking professional help. The use of herbal teas is also widespread in Mexican-American households and most people do not think to mention their use. Staff should be aware of and ask about the use of these folk remedies during medical and diet history interviews.

Processing Standards

Migrant farmworkers and their family members fall within a special category which requires expedited services. Every effort should be made to certify migrant farmworkers and members of their families as soon as possible. For more detail refer to Volume I, Section B of the procedure manual.

If an applicant is in the process of settling out of the migrant stream, determine if he has been out of the stream less than two years by taking the individual's word for it. If you question the response, you may

**Processing Standards
(cont)**

wish to check any past records you have for the individual and/or contact the local farmworker's association. Individuals who have been out of the migrant stream less than two years should receive expedited services.

Individuals who have been out of the migrant stream less than two years should receive expedited services. At the first certification after the individual or his family has been out of the stream for two years, he shall then be considered as a permanent resident. Thus the same processing standards as for other applicants/participants will apply and the migrant status on the WIC Certification Form should be changed to reflect that the participant is no longer a migrant.

**Income
Determination**

The income of an instream migrant farmworker and their family members must be determined at least once every twelve months. The date income eligibility was determined is to be documented on the authorization of transfer of certification insert, see Volume I Section I regarding income determination.

Transfers

A member of a migrant household who is transferring from another WIC Program during a certification period must be enrolled for the remainder of the certification period if a slot is available. Details of accepting and enrolling a transferring participant are described in Volume I Section I of the Procedure Manual.

**Food Package
Considerations**

Lack of storage may be a problem and the food package with more checks may need to be used.

**Nutrition /Health
Education**

Nutrition education is important for the migrant population. Due to their transient lifestyle and the possibility of language barriers, education for migrants may be different than for other segments of the WIC population. Education should be presented in culturally appropriate ways, and focus on disease causation, prevention and treatment.

**Outreach and
Referral**

Migrant clients need enhanced outreach because they are new to the area and often do not know where to obtain WIC services. Outreach is also necessary to overcome the isolation from the main population which is inherent in the migrant's lifestyle.

Cooperation and referral among all social service agencies as described in Volume I Section M of the Procedure Manual will significantly increase the effectiveness of services to migrants.

Outreach and Referral (cont)

Local farmworker organizations (NAF Multicultural Human Development Corporation) are an important community resource for assistance in reaching migrants.

- These organizations are usually known by migrants and the staff are very familiar with the situations of migrants in their area.
- The farmworker organization may be willing to assist the local agency in the actual provision of outreach; or the local agency may wish to contract with the organization for outreach services.
- These groups can provide information on when to expect migrants to arrive, how many usually come, how long they will stay and where they are likely to reside.

Clinic Environment

Another very important factor in serving migrants is flexibility of service location and hours. Since farmwork is so unpredictable, migrant farmworkers must work when employment is available.

If the mother or other adult responsible for picking checks is working in the fields, she or he will be unable to pick up the checks during daytime clinic hours.

If possible, night clinics are often most effective. It's a great advantage if the WIC clinic can be held in conjunction with health clinics or other services being conducted for migrants.

If it's impossible to hold night clinics, expand service hours for your regular clinics to absorb the influx of migrants. If night clinics are available migrants must be allowed to attend the agency's regular day time clinics if they so desire.

If additional clinic sites are added during migrant season, special consideration should be given to places where the migrants would have the least transportation problems and where they might feel the most comfortable.

- Locations to consider might be other agencies' office where migrants may go for services: health clinic, local HHSS office, farmworker organization office, the local church, laundromat.
- Consider privacy when selecting a clinic site.

Budget Issues

It is essential that local agencies who serve migrants work closely with the State Office to plan services for migrants. This is especially true of budgetary concerns including the need for increased staff time, additional rent, and so forth.

