

**A MODIFICATION of WIA TITLE I and WAGNER-PEYSER
INTEGRATED WORKFORCE PLAN**

**AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT of LABOR
PY 2013**

The Alabama Department of Labor serves as the State Workforce Agency (SWA), under Wagner-Peyser Act regulations at 20 CFR 653.107. As required in the regulations each SWA has the responsibility to provide services to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs) on a basis that is qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate to services provided to non-MSFWs. As required in regulations each SWA must also develop an Annual Outreach Plan (AOP) describing how to contact MSFWs who are not being reached by normal intake activities conducted by the State's Job Center system. The AOP also describes the activities planned for providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community.

Alabama's employment and training programs and services are available through a universally accessible internet based workforce system (Alabama Job Link) for both jobseekers and employers. Staff-assisted service is available through the American Job Center (AJC) network, also referred to as One-Stop Career Centers under the Workforce Investment Act. Through its network of forty-five Job Centers located throughout the state, outreach activity to MSFWs and their families is carried out.

The Alabama Department of Labor, as a partner agency in Alabama's One-Stop Job Center system, affirms that all available Wagner-Peyser Act services, such as job search activities, referral to employment, referral to supportive services, career guidance, and referral to WIA services, will be made available to MSFWs equitably, and to the extent that is comparable to that provided other non-MSFW customer groups. Job Center outreach to the agricultural community will assist in developing and providing timely information to be shared with other One-Stop Partner Agencies and Workforce Development Boards concerning special employment, training, economic, and educational needs of MSFWs and their families. Outreach activity will interface with the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) operator (WIA '167 grantee) activities to assure all resources and assistance available to MSFWs and their families is accessible.

1. Assessment of Need:

A review of the latest available statistics from the United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) revealed the number of acres harvested for crops in Alabama where historically MSFWs may be employed because of the crop's need for hand harvesting, hand

planting or both.

<u>CROP</u>	<u>ACREAGE</u>	<u>SEASON</u>	<u>AREA</u>
Sweet Potatoes	3,300	March – November	Appal Mtn, Gulf
Tomatoes	1,400	March – August	Statewide
Sweet Corn	1,500	March – October	Statewide
Watermelons	3,400	March – August	Statewide
Peaches	4,500 Tons	June – July	Chilton County

Overall, total acreage of the above vegetable crops harvested has decreased each year, over the last few years, due to serious drought conditions in the northern and southern growing regions.

An attempt to review agricultural labor employed in the crops identified above and the number of MSFW involved in each, and possible labor shortages found no information available upon which to make reasonable estimates.

<u>CROP</u>	<u>TOTAL AG LABOR</u>	<u>MSFWs</u>	<u>SHORTAGE</u>
Sweet Potatoes	INA	INA	INA
Tomatoes	INA	INA	INA
Sweet Corn	INA	INA	INA
Watermelons	INA	INA	INA
Peaches	INA	INA	INA
Spring Potatoes	INA	INA	INA

The number of MSFWs in Alabama estimated by calendar quarter in PY 2012 is:

Quarter ending	9/30/12	100 MSFW (estimated)
Quarter ending	12/30/12	25 MSFW (estimated)
Quarter ending	3/31/13	25 MSFW (estimated)
Quarter ending	6/30/13	100 MSFW (estimated)

Numerical Goals: The estimated number of MSFW in PY 2012 appears to be largely unchanged from the previous year’s quarterly estimates. No significant increase in MSFWs is expected in the State in PY 2013. During PY 2012, only two (2) MSFWs registered applications for work in Alabama Job Link (AJL).

However, in PY 2013, Telamon, partnering and with locations in Job Centers, will require JobLink registration of all farm workers who enter through the WIA, Title I, Section 167 door. This is expected to significantly increase the number of MSFW registered to over thirty (30).

Agricultural employers number approximately 1,500 in the state. During PY 2012, an estimated 250 agricultural job orders for over 4,000 job openings were placed in Alabama Job Link. It is projected that PY 2013, job orders will increase to 270 representing 4,500 agricultural job openings.

Information from the WIA/MSFW grantee (Telamon Corp.), Alabama Livestock and Crop Reporting Service, Extension Service and other knowledgeable sources have been used in assessing MSFW needs.

2. Outreach Activities:

Job Center outreach will assist in providing timely information to other Partner Agencies, and Workforce Development Boards, about special employment, training, economic and educational needs of MSFW and their families. Outreach activity will interface with the WIA 167 grantee activities to assure all resources and assistance available to MSFW and their families is accessible. This coordination of service is assured and enhanced through the co-location of WIA 167 grantee staff in Job Centers. The continuing cooperative agreement with the WIA/MSFW Grantee will produce approximately 100 MSFW outreach contacts and Job Center staff will make another 850 contacts during PY 2013.

Assessment of Available Resources: Due to the small number of MSFW in the state, one-half (0.5) of a full-time equivalent Wagner-Peyser staff position will be assigned outreach activities. This represents no change from recent years. Other staff may be assigned as needed. No additional special outreach funds have been earmarked for PY 2013.

Proposed Outreach Activities: Each Job Center will identify MSFW service needs and contact individuals and groups to offer and provide services to those not reached by usual Job Center intake activities. Pre-seasonal canvassing will be conducted by local office staff with leads provided from the State Monitor Advocate to determine anticipated MSFW population in local Center areas.

Intensive effort will be made to contact all MSFWs whose usual residence is in the local Center area and those that migrate into the area that do not contact Job Centers for service. MSFWs will be informed of their rights to full Job Center services and invited to the local Center for registration, orientation and assessment in accordance with ADOL/MSFW regulations. Services, including job referral, job development, as well as referral to other service agencies will be provided. Appropriate information will be directed to MSFWs, informing them of their rights under various Federal and State laws, as well as directives of service agencies in the community. Handouts will be given to each person contacted advising them of this information.

Bilingual regular and outreach staff, if possible, will be assigned to offices where substantial proportions of MSFWs are primarily fluent and/or literate in Spanish, but not in English.

MSFWs choosing to pursue more stable employment in non-agricultural jobs will be assisted as appropriate. Referral to training will be increased through

improved cooperation with the State WIA/MSFW grantee. Complainants will be assisted with filing complaints and resolution will be attempted, or those complaints will be referred to appropriate agencies.

This plan has been furnished to the State MSFW Monitor Advocate, WIA Section 167 Grantee, and other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations for review and comment.

3. Services Provided to MSFWs through the American Job Center Network:

Services, to include, core, intensive and training, will be provided MSFWs through the Alabama Job Center system. Intensive effort will be made to contact MSFWs whose usual residence is in the local office area and those that migrate into the area that do not contact Job Centers for service. MSFWs will be provided information about services available through Job Centers and invited to their local Center for registration into Alabama Job Link, the state's workforce system. Self-service is available as an option and supported by AJL's ability to offer operation in any of thirteen languages found to be most common to Alabama's populous.

Staff-assisted services will be also be available to include a Job Center orientation, assessment and posting of a resume in the electronic job match system. Services including job referral, job development, as well as referral to other service agencies including WIA training will be provided as appropriate.

4. Services Provided to Agricultural Employers through the American Job Center Network:

Job Centers will continue an active employer relations program that includes service to agricultural employers. This effort has been intensified to assist farmers as they seek new recruitment sources of labor. The bulk of agricultural operations in Alabama, however, are not labor intensive, and as a result operations often depend on family members, year-round workers, and mechanization.

In many instances, operations which are labor intensive depend on seasonal help drawn from the local area's labor pool. Based on experience and knowledge of the State's labor market, areas which have traditionally used MSFW have been identified. Through the network of local Job Centers, contacts in the community, and awareness of local labor market conditions, a network is in place to identify employers who use, or are likely to use MSFW.

The employer outreach program, and an intensive employer relations campaign in areas of need, forms the basis for the employer/worker linkage.

Implementation of a new program, Work Alabama, offers a streamlined process for farmers needing temporary workers and workers seeking temporary

agricultural work to register and recruit through Alabama Job Link. Additionally, Job Center staff in intensive farm labor areas network with community agencies in an attempt to ensure that the full range of needed services are delivered to farm workers and employers.

State and Job Center staff will participate in agricultural forums to make farmers aware of all services available to them including Work Alabama, the automated job order/clearance system, H2A Program, and other rural manpower services.

5. Data Analysis:

Data analysis, as has been evidenced in this plan, is severely restricted due to the lack of data readily available on agricultural labor including MSFW. The need to determine estimates of the number of farm workers in the state, and by crop if possible is essential. The suggested collaboration of partners may yield some ways to obtain accurate counts. Meetings with partners and organizations and agencies with agricultural interests will be sought to explore means to improve estimates of farm workers in the state.

	<u>PY 2011</u>	<u>PY 2012 1/</u>	<u>PY 2013 2/</u>
No. of Agricultural job orders received	230	250	270
No. of Agricultural job openings received	1,232	4,044	4,500
No. of Agricultural job orders filled	INA	INA	INA
Percent to be filled	INA	INA	INA
No. Interstate clearance orders received	INA	INA	INA
No. Interstate clearance orders initiated	53	38	55

1/ Estimated based on data for July 2012 – March 2013

2/ Projected

6. List of Organizations from which comments and suggestions were solicited:

- WIA/MSFW Grantee – Telamon Corp.
- Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries
- Alabama Farmers Federation
- Monitor Advocate - MSFW
- Cooperative Extension System, Alabama

7. Review and Public Comment:

In developing the Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP) information and suggestions were solicited from the WIA 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee (Telamon Corp), and other appropriate groups, agencies, organizations to include: the Alabama Cooperative Extension

System, Alabama Farmers Federation (ALFA), and Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries. The State Monitor Advocate for MSFW was also provided an opportunity to review and comment on the AOP.

Following are the suggestions received and the State response:

Telamon

- Comment: Telamon partnering and location in Job Centers will require JobLink registration of all farm workers who enter through the WIA, Title I, Section 167 door. This is expected to at least triple the number of MSFW originally projected to register.
- Response: Closer collaboration/coordination with partners serving MSFW should further outreach efforts resulting in increased registrations and access to all services of the One Stop delivery system.
- Comment: Need to determine estimates of the number of farm workers in the state. Collaboration of partners may yield some ways to obtain accurate counts.
- Response: Meetings with partners and organizations and agencies with agricultural interests will be pursued to explore means to improve estimates of farm workers in the state.

Alabama Farmers Federation (ALFA)

- Comment: Information on services doesn't always get to farmers and farm workers.
- Response: Outreach and networking through agricultural groups, agencies and organizations should help ensure farmers and farm workers are aware of the services available to them.
- Comment: Farmers don't always use the services available to them.
- Response: Outreach and networking through agricultural groups, agencies and organizations should ensure farmers are aware of the services available to them.

Alabama Cooperative Extension System

- Comment: Review of the outreach plan appears appropriate to reach the intended audience. No suggestions were offered.
- Response: None.

Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries

- Comment: Farmers are flexible and adaptable in their crops selection to meet labor conditions in their area.
- Response: Outreach and networking through agricultural groups, agencies and organizations should help ensure farmers are aware of the services available to them to assist in adapting to change.

State Monitor Advocate

- Comment: Better data on the number of farm workers in the state is needed.
- Response: Meetings with partners and organizations and agencies with agricultural interests will be pursued to explore means to improve estimates of farm workers in the state.