



**Agriculture Workforce Housing Facilitation Team**

**Meeting:** Tuesday, July 24, 2014

**Facilitator:** Theresa Wingard, OHCS Operations and Policy Analyst

**Members Present:**

Daniel Quinones, DOE	Kathleen Kincade, OSHA	Natasha Detweiler, OHCS
Don Herman, OHCS	Kim Travis, OHCS	Rich Malloy, Bienestar
Dora Herrera, FLC	Laurie Hoefler, LSO	Shelly Wilkins-Ehenger, MCHA
Fernando Gutierrez, DOE	Marc Overbeck, OHPR	Stan Danskey, E & S Farms
John McCulley, CFG & BMG	Maria Elena Castro M., OHA	Tomas Schwabe, OSHA

**Mission:** Federal, state, local, and non-governmental leadership working together to improve Housing and economic opportunities for agriculture workers

**Introductions:** New members: Dora Herra, OED, Tomas Schwabe, OSHA, Stan Danskey E & S Farms

**OHCS Transition:** OHCS Director, Margaret Van Vliet was unable to attend this meeting. She will provide an OHCS transition update at an upcoming meeting. Margaret hopes to attend future AWHFT meetings.

**May Meeting Action Item:** Team members will send their program’s resource information to Natasha. She will add the resources to the information being compiled by the Needs and Research Team. The team’s current focus is Marion County but team members may report resources for other areas as well.

**Migrant Farmworker Housing:** Stan Danskey, a grower from Woodburn, joined the team to share his on farm housing concerns. Stan’s crops run from June through September. His workforce consists of migrant workers, which add to his housing issues and the retention of workers. His farmworker housing is barracks style, originally intended for single males. He wants to remodel the barracks style housing to family units but needs to secure financing. The group discussed the possibility of using the agriculture workforce housing tax credit. There was some concern whether Mr. Danskey’s project would qualify for the tax credit. If not, members wondered if the tax credit program could be modified in order to allow the small growers to qualify. Don Herman provided copies of the Agriculture

Workforce Housing Tax Credit factsheet. Don will follow-up with Mr. Danskey to discuss the agriculture workforce housing tax credit in more detail.

**Discussion:** The group noted that housing issues for migrant workers and growers who depend on migrant workers are very different from those of permanent workers and the growers who rely on them. It is difficult to retain migrant workers when the grower is not able to provide housing. It is also difficult for growers to afford to provide housing when their picking seasons are shorter. Some growers have housing that is not being utilized while other growers do not have any housing and are unable to retain workers. In addition, workers are using cell phones to communicate the location of crops, the best fields, and the highest wages, leaving growers without any workers when they hear of better opportunities elsewhere. In order to keep workers year round, growers have begun to diversify crops, which allow workers to work on one farm for a longer time.

Growers in Hood River and The Dalles work together on housing. When one grower has finished a crop, but has housing, the grower allows workers to continue to live in his housing while picking crops on other farms. The group wondered if a few of the growers might share their housing experience with this group.

The group discussed other types of housing for migrant workers. Suggestions included Yurts, growers sharing housing, RVs, and offsite units.

**Future Workforce Issues:** Concerns were raised about workers aging out. The teenage workers today do not have an interest in working crops as a career and will likely move on. With the decrease in workers, more growers are looking at automation as a way to pick their crops.

**Team Focus:** There was some concern that the group was split between focusing on migrant housing and housing for permanent workers, both being important. It was suggested the group focus on addressing the existing substandard agriculture workforce housing in areas where there is the most need. It was noted that the Streamlining Sub-Committee's work on the alignment and streamlining of the Market Strategy Report would provide focus, direction, and next steps for this group.

**Note:** The focus of this group determined during the January meeting, is as follows:

1. Determine the current unmet need for farmworker housing and how to address it
  - a. Marion County will be the pilot county the team will assess.
  - b. Members of the team will provide statistics from their office/agency to use in the assessment
2. The Needs and Research and the Alignment and Streamlining sub-committees will continue to meet; completing projects, they are currently working on.

**Unmet Need:** It was mentioned that the group should define "unmet need" outlined in the team's focus above. For some, the best way to determine "unmet need" is to survey workers. However, financing for this project would be difficult. In addition, it would be challenging for workers to take time away from work or be afraid to answer survey questions. The crop mapping will help the group determine the type of workforce needed and give the group a base for determining the housing need for each county.

**Agency Resource Chart:** Laurie provided a draft of the agency resource chart, which reflected the group's discussion from the May meeting. The chart is intended to map out the connection between agencies and the roles they play. Laurie will collect additional information and finalize the chart for the next meeting.

**Sub-Committee reports:**

- Alignment and Streamlining: **Claudia Cantu** – No report this meeting
- Needs and Research: **Natasha Detweiler** – The needs survey was sent to the Ag groups after the May meeting. Only three responses were received and one survey completed. The sub-committee will send an e-mail reminder with a deadline for responses. Natasha hopes to provide a survey result summary at the next meeting.

**Information Sharing:**

- It was suggested that BOLI be invited to future meetings. BOLI oversees the farmworker contractors. The group would also like to invite BOLI to make a presentation. Stan Wojtyla and Ms. Parra were offered as possible presenters.
- Rich Malloy discussed the assistance received for a Bienestar project, acknowledging the importance of working together to further Ag housing.

**Action Items:**

- Daniel Quinones will e-mail his handout and BOLI contact information to Theresa
- Theresa will request a BOLI presentation for the September meeting
- Laurie Hoefler will complete the agency resource chart for the next meeting
- Theresa will research the possibility of having Hood River growers make a presentation at a future meeting
- Don Herman will contact Stan Danskey to discuss his options for using the Agriculture Workforce Housing Tax Credit
- DOE may attend the grower association meetings to discuss migrant housing issues

**Next Meeting:**

OHCS, Room 124A

Thursday, September 25, 2014

10:00-12:00