



*“We build bridges across divides to deepen connection to Christ and one another to serve the world.”*

### More Information

- [www.nfwm.org](http://www.nfwm.org)
- <https://www.pcusa-peva.org/migrant-farm-workers-project-page>
- <https://virginiainterfaithcenter.org/economic-justice/farmworker-justice/>
- [www.ecmhsp.org](http://www.ecmhsp.org)
- [www.awacoalition.org/](http://www.awacoalition.org/)
- [www.fairfoodprogram.org](http://www.fairfoodprogram.org)
- [www.ciw-online.org/](http://www.ciw-online.org/)
- [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org)
- <https://pcusa.org/about-pcusa/agencies-entities/interim-unified-agency/ministry-areas/immigration-issues>



**The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia**

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## MIGRANT FARM WORKERS & SEASONAL AGRICULTURE WORKERS

*They bring food to our table but are not invited to the feast...*

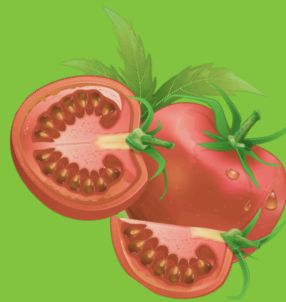
*There is no food justice without justice for those who grow, pick, and prepare our food...*

[www.pcusa-peva.org/migrant-farm-workers-project-page](http://www.pcusa-peva.org/migrant-farm-workers-project-page)



## WHO ARE MIGRANT FARM WORKERS & SEASONAL AGRICULTURE WORKERS?

- 68% are male
- 32% are female
- 69% Mexican & Mexican American
- 6% Central American
- 1% South American, Caribbean, Asia & Pacific Islands
- Average age in the U.S. of 35-38.
- Average life expectancy is 49 years

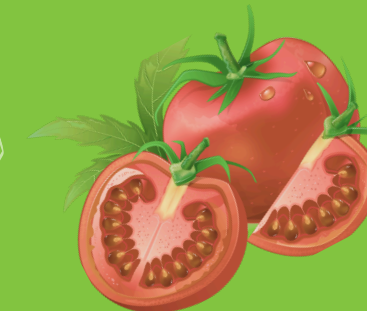


## WHAT ARE THE PRIMARY CROPS WORKED?

- 37% vegetables
- 32% fruit & nuts
- 19% horticulture
- 10% field crops (hay, grain, or cotton)
- 3% miscellaneous or multiple crops

In the last several years, an average of five farm worker deaths have occurred each growing season.

Farm workers are paid 55 -60 cents per 32 lb. bucket of produce. Very few are paid minimum wage or H2A (temporary agricultural program visa), it's more about production. H-2A employers usually pay wages based on tiers of job experience requirements and receive adjustments to offset the nonwage costs of the H-2A program. Farmers who required less than 500 "man days" of labor in the previous year are exempt paying the federal minimum wage.



## MORE CONTACTS

### **Migrant & Seasonal Farmworkers Ministry Presbytery of Eastern Virginia**

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### **United Methodist Church -**

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### **Baptist Church**

**Marisa Sanchez**

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## CONTACTS

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**Parksley Migrant Head Start Center**  
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**Cheriton Migrant Head Start Center**  
**Rhonda Strand, Center Director,**  
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**Dos Santos Food Pantry & Garden – Una Familia Ministry- Tutoring,**  
**Ministry of St. James & St. George's Episcopal Churches (Serving**  
**Pungoteague, Parksley and Eastville).**  
**Betty Mariner, Food Pantry Director**  
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**Agricultural Workers Advocacy Coalition**  
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**Eastern Shore Migrant Ministry**  
**Ministry of Catholic Charities**  
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**Legal Aid Justice Center**  
**Manuel Gago, Worker Justice Program Director**  
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Every year roughly 2,000 migrant and seasonal farm workers arrive on the Eastern Shore of Virginia starting in late April and stay through October. They work long hours: 10-12 hours a day, 7 days a week throughout the growing and harvesting season. They are the backbone of the local agricultural economy. Yet they live and work among us in poverty and isolation. The Eastern Shore of Virginia is an area that produces tomatoes, potatoes, and other produce that fills local grocery store shelves and sees its population swell in the summer months as migrant and seasonal workers arrive to do the essential agricultural labor and harvesting food.

Churches have long had a commitment to ministry with migrant and seasonal farm workers and their families, seeking to provide ministries and services that address the wide range of special needs experienced by those who are temporarily in our communities to meet farming's essential seasonal employment needs.

By planning and working cooperatively, we learn from each other. We see and better understand "the big picture." We are able to complement each other's work, and we use our limited resources more effectively all for the benefit of the migrant and seasonal community we seek to serve.



**PEVA PARTNERS WITH  
THE EAST COAST MIGRANT  
HEAD START CENTERS ON THE EASTERN SHORE  
ASSISTING FAMILIES  
WHAT CAN WE DO?**

**PRAY, DONATE, VOLUNTEER & ADVOCATE**

Incorporate prayers for farmers and the earth into your daily life and remember the work of all who helped make your meals possible. The following list of needs offers specific ways in which you can be involved. PEVA's Hunger Action Advocate will be more than happy to arrange for pick up from your church, or you may also bring donated items to the PEVA office. (Mon.-Thrus. 10 AM-4PM usually the second week of the month of July ONLY). Your church can pledge funds for the ministry just as your church pledges for church giving each year.

**Food Kits are the most needed item each season.**

**Food Kit** - Put together a canvas grocery bag containing one of each: 4lb bag of MASECA (cornmeal) for tortillas and or all-purpose flour for other cooking, 2-5lb bag of dried beans (black and or pinto only), 16-48oz oil for cooking, 2-10lbs bag of enriched long grain rice 12-18oz can of jalapenos, canned tomato sauce & canned vegetables, a can of fruit, dry fruit or a package of Goya Maria Cookies.



***Bless the hands that  
pick, process or serve  
our food.  
Bless the backs that  
ache from work that  
feeds others.***

**-Amen**

**Prayer for Mindfulness**

Let us begin by recalling the words of Cesar Chavez: "Every time we sit at a table at night or in the morning to enjoy the fruits and grain and vegetables from our good earth, remember that they come from the work of men and women and children who have been exploited for generations..." Almighty God, too often we don't pay attention, we don't stop to think that, even in this day and age, injustice remains an invisible ingredient in much of the food that we eat. Shake us awake, O God, open our eyes to see our power and obligation as consumers to help put things right. Justice demands it.

**Love demands it.**

**-Amen**

**National Farmer Worker Ministry**

***Today, we lift up the migrant and  
seasonal farm workers and their  
families in our communities and  
throughout the commonwealth.***

***We ask your support and  
encouragement for those who  
feel their dignity is denied.  
Let them know they are loved.***

**-Amen**

**God of Liberation,**

**We come before You in grief and outrage, our hearts burdened by the cries of your beloved children—farmworkers torn from their fields, families separated, and communities living in fear.**

**Holy One, we remember those who rise before dawn, who sweat under the sun to feed us, yet are denied the fruits of their labor. We lift up the parents detained, the children who weep in uncertainty and the neighbors who wait and wonder who will be next.**

**Forgive us for the ways we have benefited from injustice, or accepted policies that dehumanize. Stir us to action. Let our prayers move our feet, our resources, and our voices.**

**We pray for healing for the traumatized, protection for the vulnerable, and courage for those offering sanctuary and solidarity. Guide your Church to be a refuge—a brave and compassionate witness to your justice and love.**

**God of mercy, may we embody the Beloved Community where all are fed, all are free, and no one is illegal.**

**In the name of the Liberator Christ, who was himself a refugee, we pray.**

**- Amen**

**Jennifer R. Evans,**

**Associate for PHP Communications and National Partnerships**

**Bless the hands of the people  
of the earth,**

**The hands that plant the seed,  
The hands that bind the harvest,**

**The hands that carry the  
burden of life.**

**Soften the hands of the oppressor and Strengthen  
the hands  
of the oppressed.**

**Bless the hands of the farm workers,**

**Bless the hands of those  
in power above them**

**That the measure they deal  
will be tempered**

**With justice and compassion.**

**- Amen**

**National Farmer Worker Ministry**



**Hygiene Kits** - Put together a gallon zip lock bag containing one adult toothbrush, (one child's toothbrush), one tube of adult toothpaste (4-7 ounces), (one tube of child toothpaste), one hand towel, one washcloth, one comb, one nail clipper, one bar of soap (bath size, in wrapper), six Band-aids and travel hand sanitizers or wipes.

**Clothing** - 100% cotton clothing, children's clothing NB-5T spring, summer, and light fall attire. Sun hats or visors, baseball caps, adult jeans (regular sizes), T-shirts short sleeve and long sleeve (S-XL), socks, bandanas and hats.

**Shoes** - Children and adult (athletic shoes, no winter shoes)

**Household** - Laundry soap (smaller sizes), linens, light weight blankets, small household cleaners and reusable canvas bags.

**School Kits** - a school bag with just the basics for those starting Kindergarten.

**Children Books** - In English & Spanish only.

**Monetary Gifts** - Over the counter medicines, eyeglasses, grocery store gift cards (Food Lion) or visa gift cards (\$15-\$20)

**Baby Diapers & Wipes** - Disposable diapers (size NB - 7) & baby wipes

**Baby Kits** - Six to eight disposable diapers (size NB - 1), two shirts, two washcloths, two gowns or sleepers, one sweater or sweatshirt, two receiving blankets (one can be knitted or crocheted).





*There are several migrant, seasonal camps, and trailer park communities on Virginia's Eastern Shore.*

Organizations and community groups continues to work alongside migrant laborers and with others to push for improved working conditions and stronger enforcement of existing rules.

- Awareness
- Connect with Organizations and community groups in this work and work alongside with them.
- Educate
- Lobby/Letter Writing
- Petition
- Shop/Support Farm Workers through what you buy.



## NEEDS OF A FARM WORKER & SEASONAL AGRICULTURE WORKER MAY INCLUDE

- Recognition by the community of the value of the migrant farm worker to the area's economy
- Ability to rise above the poverty level
- Everyday items, Basic needs
- Bilingual assistance for farm workers
- Medical insurance, reciprocity, or portability of Medicaid
- Child labor protection
- Transportation to prenatal and WIC appointments
- Provision for religious care, formation, and worship
- Adequate housing
- Local "odd jobs"
- Head Start programs & more daycare facilities.
- Assistance with medical payments
- Greater access to health and community services and nutrition classes
- More English-language instruction
- Expanded opportunities for skills training and general education.
- Access to recreational programs and facilities

