



During Framework's **Outreach to Agricultural Workers** event on January 28, 2021, panelists Stephanie Bratnick (International Rescue Committee) and Gonzalo Martinez de Vedia (Verité) shared their insights on conducting outreach to individuals at risk for labor trafficking in the agriculture industry.

- [USDA Agricultural Census](#)
- [USDOL Wage and Hour Division](#)
- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#)
- [Spotlight app](#) (H-2A & H-2B workers)
- State-level housing and labor organizations
- Court records
- Media scans

Start by getting to know your community. That will impact who you partner with and how you partner with them, the materials you create, and the access points you use to connect with workers.

Labor trafficking of agricultural workers looks different throughout the country, as some workers migrate from place to place and others work at the same location year-round. Utilizing information available from regulatory agencies and other online sources will help you identify where workers may be at risk in your area.

Hear about Stephanie's approach to outreach



**Partner with local organizations** that may be doing outreach work already, or who may be assisting workers in other ways, such as mobile consulates or health care units, grassroots organizations, places of worship, and workers unions. These partnerships can provide opportunities for shared resources and joint outreach, and can lead to referral pathways that your organization may not have access to alone.

**Partnership Questions**

- What are our shared goals?
- Where do our mandates overlap?
- What are our dreams for this work?
- How can we work together to build our capacity to meet our goals?
- What are new opportunities for shared work?

- Consider what languages are spoken. With a majority of farmworkers from Latin America, do include Spanish, but also consider indigenous languages and workers from other parts of the world.
- Keep language simple—for example:  
 You have rights. | Are you getting paid for your work? | Are you being threatened?
- Use visuals to capture attention (without sensationalizing) and to make messages accessible despite language and literacy barriers.
- Include contact information.

## Separate yourself from the employer to build trust

An ideal location to conduct outreach does not require permission from an employer to enter, and is not within view or awareness of the employer. Typically, this means **worker housing**, but alternative access points could include **recruitment points, transportation points, shopping locations, laundromats, places of worship, or cash wiring service locations**. Always have a safety plan in place for you and your staff when travelling to these locations.



### A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO OUTREACH

The rights-based approach acknowledges that workers are not passive recipients of services but are active participants in the direction of their lives as rights-bearers.

Using this approach means that participation and collaboration with workers is not just the means to an end, but the core purpose of the work.

### IN PRACTICE...

- Team up with worker organizations already engaged in outreach.
- Partner with community leaders familiar with what the community needs.
- Incorporate basic questions:
  - *What more do you need?*
  - *What works for your community?*
  - *How can we best serve you?*
- Be inclusive. Consider the growing number of female-identifying farmworkers, children, and families.

Hear how Gonzalo measures successful outreach



## PANELIST Q&A

Are there any security/privacy/confidentiality concerns with utilizing the [online self-ID form](#)? Any tips for implementing?


For all outreach across any sector, it is important to keep in mind that it is up to the person who may be experiencing trafficking or exploitation to assess if it is safe for them to take any outreach material/information and have it on them. For example, if the trafficker finds a card with a QR code and scans it, that may put the worker in more harm. With an online form, confidentiality is typically upheld easily, as the results go directly to the caseworker/specialist within the organization, and results can be stored securely in a computer. As technology continues to evolve, many workers may already be familiar with QR codes, so implementing a form like this might be as simple as including it in other outreach literature that is being distributed.

Can you recommend any movies that are related to labor trafficking that can be shown in worker camps during movie nights?

*The Harvest/La Cosecha*, *Rape in the Fields*, and *Trafficked in America* are three great documentaries about labor trafficking among agricultural workers.

Are there any organizations that are specific to serving Asian populations experiencing labor trafficking in the US in this context?

This varies by region, and most agencies that specialize in serving specific communities do not only focus on labor trafficking. The closest there might be are Asian population-serving agencies that respond to both labor and sex trafficking as well as other vulnerable individuals.



How have your agencies adapted your outreach approaches in the context of COVID-19?



Click to hear about some innovations Stephanie and Gonzalo shared

How can you find out where employees live, and how do you keep your staff safe during visits to these sites?

Remember that outreach starts with identifying who is already in contact with workers and leveraging those relationships. Safety discussions are an important part of those collaborations. If your organization moves forward with conducting direct outreach, the U.S. Department of Labor's website has "[disclosure data](#)" for H-2A visas, which lists the addresses of (as well as directions to) employer-provided housing for guest workers. While safety precautions can vary between locations, the most important factor is to take it step by step. If you can, gain insight from someone who is familiar with the area to best prepare yourself and your staff.

**Are there materials/brochures that can be provided to clients whose primary language is perhaps less widely spoken?**

Any materials should ideally be translated into the language(s) spoken by your target population(s). Using images to depict workplace abuses is a great way to bridge the language and literacy divide.

**Can you speak on how to partner with organizations and agencies that are led or informed by worker input (e.g., [Coalition of Immokalee Workers](#); [Venceremos](#); [Milk with Dignity](#); [United Farm Workers](#); [Pinos y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste](#); [Farm Labor Organizing Committee](#); [Fuerza del Valle](#))?**

Even if you are not in an area where these organizations are working, ask around. The list above names some of the better-known agencies that have significant worker input and leadership, but many more exist. Keep in mind that newer and more grassroots groups may not prioritize a web presence as a part of their strategy, so online searches should be complemented with local networking. The best way to know if an agency is meaningfully engaging with farm workers in your area is to just ask local workers which unions or agencies, if any, they take part in or follow. Even if no such groups exist in your area, you may still be able to look into the work that the groups above are doing and utilize their tools or approaches for your community.

**What are best practices for connecting with laborers who work on marijuana farms?**

This is a new area of outreach as many states just recently legalized marijuana production and there are minimal lessons that can be applied when designing outreach efforts to marijuana farmers. It is highly advisable to only outreach workers operating on legal marijuana production sites. Illegal marijuana farms are unsafe places for workers and for service providers. Often law enforcement runs operations to crack down on illegal production. Outreach workers may be able to build relationships with law enforcement to be on hand during operations, and speak with workers who are detained due to the investigation. That said, most workers who are pulled off farms during operations are reluctant to speak about their victimization due to a high level of threats to their family and loved ones.

For legal marijuana farms, some best practices from general agriculture outreach can be applied. Outreach workers could map the region's marijuana farms, pinpointing employer-sponsored housing sites to visit or local hostels/backpacking inns where immigrants often stay. Signs and other outreach material could be posted and left in places where workers frequent: grocery stores, convenience stores, laundry mats, gas and bus stations, bars, or cash checking stores. It is also advisable to review the marijuana labor laws and regulations in your state. As marijuana use and distribution remains illegal under federal statute, each state treats this sector differently. Outreach material and assistance should focus on the rights workers have within the state context and where they can go for help if they are exploited for marijuana production.

## RESOURCES

- [Contratados.org](https://www.contratados.org) – Operated by the Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Contratados is a workers’ rights initiative to investigate and uncover the actors and processes in low-wage labor recruitment along the Mexico-U.S. migrant stream. The website enables workers to read employer and recruiter reviews, write their own review, and learn about their rights and how to prevent and report abuses.
- [Online Self-Screening Tool](#) – Anti-trafficking referral tool used by the IRC when conducting outreach in Northern California. The website is typically accessed by workers who scan a QR code on outreach materials.
- [ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration](#) – Comprehensive guidelines and best practices for a rights-based approach to labor migration policy.
- [Guidelines for a Rights-Based Approach](#) – Information regarding how to enhance the quality, impact, and sustainability of national poverty reduction strategies.
- [Faces of Human Trafficking](#) – Video series produced by the Office for Victims of Crime that includes information about labor and sex trafficking, multidisciplinary approaches to serving victims of human trafficking, effective victim services, victims’ legal needs, and voices of survivors. Includes a discussion guide, fact sheets, and education posters.
- [ILO Indicators of Trafficking](#) – Lists strong and medium indicators of various stages in the trafficking process for adults and children, in both labor and sex trafficking situations.
- [Report on H-2A Visa Program](#) – A report by Farmworker Justice that analyzes the H-2A program and addresses the issues it poses to agricultural workers.



To learn more about Framework or to request training, technical assistance, or individualized support on labor trafficking, visit us at [FrameworkTA.org](https://FrameworkTA.org).

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