



COUNTY OF MONTEREY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Monterey Farmworker Resource Center

Population Needs Assessment Report
2023

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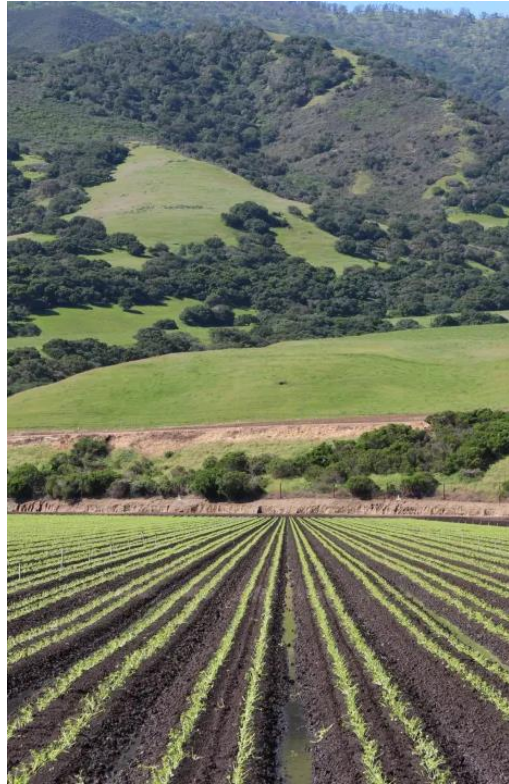
SUMMARY

Monterey County has a population of 432,858, with 41,704 from the US Census (2022) identifying as agricultural workers¹. County of Monterey Health Department Farmworker Resource Center (FRC) project team members, in preparation for developing the project outreach and education plans, sought to identify specific needs, barriers, and solutions for farmworkers in Monterey County through gathering and analyzing primary and secondary data.

To generate comprehensive and updated insights Monterey County farmworker community needs, secondary source reports were used, including the 2022 Agricultural Workers: Monterey County, California Occupation Report by the Monterey County Workforce Development Board², 2022 Monterey County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA)³, and the 2023 University of California Merced (UC Merced) Farmworker Health in California report⁴. County of Monterey internal 2023 Virus Integrated Distribution of Aid (VIDA)

community outreach and education reports were also utilized to highlight high need for resources and services in communities and neighborhoods where farmworkers live and shop. Primary source data was obtained from surveys distributed by County of Monterey Health Department FRC project team to 170 farmworkers and 36 employers of farmworkers between April 22, 2023, and May 16, 2023. The surveys are specifically designed to gather relevant information from the farmworker population, providing a current understanding of their unique challenges and opportunities for improvement in Monterey County.

The CHNA report provided a comprehensive overview of Monterey County's health needs, highlighting priority concerns based on responses and “areas of opportunity,” which represents an analysis of significant health needs in Monterey County³. The following have been identified as priority health needs across the county with south county and Salinas regions generally having higher prevalence or identified need for many of the issues: diabetes; mental health; access to health care services; nutrition, physical activity & weight; heart disease & stroke; substance use; housing; infant health & family planning; injury & violence; cancer; and potentially disabling conditions³. In the areas of opportunity, access to healthcare emerges as a significant challenge for many residents, driven by factors such as lack of insurance, transportation limitations, business hours, and language barriers³. Mental health is also highlighted with high rates of depression and stress, as well as difficulty accessing mental health services reported among the county's population and specifically for south county residents³. Chronic disease prevention is another crucial focus, given the prevalence of conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and



cancer, necessitating efforts to address risk factors like poor nutrition and physical inactivity. Environmental health is an additional concern, with residents exposed to pesticides and contaminants due to the proximity of agricultural fields and activities³. The report reveals significant data points worth noting. For instance, 31% of Monterey County residents would struggle to cover an unexpected \$400 expense without incurring debt³. Additionally, 20% of adults lack health insurance coverage, potentially hindering their access to necessary care³.

The 2023 UC Merced - Farmworker Health in California report covered a wide range of topics and provided valuable insights into the needs and challenges of farmworkers⁴. Topics include farmworker social and economic conditions, the current health of farmworkers (with a focus on women's and reproductive health, physical health, and the impact of COVID-19), and health concerns related to the use of preventive health services, health behaviors, and healthcare insurance and access⁴. The survey results included a breakdown by region⁴. For the Central Coast region, which includes Monterey County, the issues with the worse outcomes include lack of health insurance and feeling "nervous," or "on-edge"⁴.

County of Monterey internal 2023 Virus Integrated Distribution of Aid (VIDA) community outreach and education reports revealed the importance of addressing farmworker health and wellness. The VIDA project's ability to reach farmworkers, utilizing a Community Health Worker (CHW) model, at their place of employment contributed to reducing equity gaps which would have been otherwise exacerbated because of the COVID-19 Pandemic. VIDA identified and addressed immediate challenges faced by farmworkers. Due to transportation challenges, many farmworkers would have been otherwise unable to be rapidly tested or vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus. Meeting the farmworkers on-site allowed for timely quarantine and/or isolation for those testing positive for the virus. Connecting to needed resources also reduced the wait times to receive needed services. Throughout the three years of VIDA outreach and education efforts, VIDA CHWs identified high need to address health care services, financial support, childcare needs, digital literacy, and access to basic needs such as food, water, and housing within farmworker communities in Monterey County.

Among the farmworkers surveyed in our Farmworker Survey, most reported living in the South County and Salinas regions of the county and are employed as farmworkers for the season or full-time. Most report a need to address health care services, and financial support, especially around rental and utility assistance and social services. Of the employers surveyed in our Farmworker Employer Survey, most reported farmworkers they employed as mainly located in the South County or Salinas regions of the county. Employers echoed farmworker concerns and emphasized the importance of accessible housing, healthcare, and early childhood education for the well-being of farmworkers and their families. One employer specifically highlighted the importance of addressing these needs by stating, " Our employees need support getting accessible housing. More comfortable rents. Also, accessibility to affordable preventive care to avoid expensive treatments because they are not taking care of pain." Addressing these priority needs is essential to ensure the well-being and stability of farmworkers and their families in Monterey County.

Monterey County Farmworker Population Needs Assessment Issues by Report

| Monterey County 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment | UC Merced Farmworker Health Survey | Monterey County 2023 Farmworker Survey | Monterey County 2023 Farmworker Employer Survey | Monterey County 2022 VIDA Community Challenges |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Access to Care | Access to health care and lack of health insurance | Access to and quality of health care | Access to Health Care | Access to health care |
| Housing | Housing conditions | Affordable housing | Housing | Housing |
| Mental Health | Mental health | Mental health | Access to wellness services | Digital Access |
| Nutrition, physical activity, and obesity | Obesity and associated risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, | Lack of services in specific regions | Access to financial Services | Utility Assistance |
| Diabetes | Substance Use | Accessible transportation | Access to legal services | Transportation |
| Heart Disease & Stroke | Economic Security | Employment opportunities | Access to food and meal support | Financial Support Services |
| Substance Use | Workplace safety and rights | Language accessibility | Early Childhood Education for children of farmworkers | Childcare |
| Infant health & Family Planning | Women’s reproductive health | Supports for essential expenses (food, rent, utilities) | Emergency support services | Food, clothing, household goods, hygiene products |
| Note: Issues are not listed in a particular priority order | | | | |

Overall, the findings highlight the need to establish outreach and education efforts focused on access to care, social/education/wellness services, financial support, and chronic health conditions. The data will be used to guide expansion of prior outreach and education efforts by Community Health Workers as a model that has proven successful to address the specific needs identified.

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The 2023 Farmworker Population Needs Assessment Report data collection methodology focused on a combination of secondary and primary data which were used as part of a mixed methods approach that also triangulated across the various data sources to find common themes and differences in identified issues. These analytics were used to identify the most prevalent needs to inform or refine the design for the farmworker resource center project outreach and education methods.

Several already published reports that included data related to farmworker social and health needs were assessed. The 2022 Agricultural Workers: Monterey County, California Occupation Report provided an overview of occupation demographics, employment by industry, education profile, and a few other occupation-related indicators. The 2022 Monterey County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) report provided a comprehensive collection of primary and secondary data, including county-level information and specific sociodemographic data. It incorporates various datasets such as census data, vital statistics, online key informant surveys, and other health-related data collected between the calendar years 2021 and 2022. Given the significant farmworker population in the county, we recognize that the data from the CHNA, particularly those reflecting South County and the Salinas area, are likely to be relevant to farmworkers. The U.C Merced Farmworker Health Report employed a community-engaged research approach, using stratified sampling based on the geographic density of farmworkers across different regions in California between the calendar years 2021 and 2022. Five regions were covered in the study, including the Central Coast region, where 266 individuals (21%) representing Salinas Valley, Monterey County were surveyed³. The study's goal was to examine agricultural worker health and well-being, in addition to health care access, local and state policies, and health and training needs.

For more data specific to Monterey County farmworkers, employer and employee responses to our surveys and County of Monterey internal 2023 Virus Integrated Distribution of Aid (VIDA) community outreach and education reports were utilized. VIDA reports highlight the most requested resources and services utilized by Monterey County residents throughout the 2022 calendar year as reported by the VIDA Community Health Worker (CHW) Data Analysts. VIDA CHWs interact and support thousands of residents every month in Monterey County, connecting individuals to resources and supports for identified social determinants of health and other needs. This information provides valuable insights into the needs and preferences of the local population and many of the residents seeking services from the VIDA CHWs were from farmworker communities. In 2022, CHWs visited agricultural fields over 150 times, allowing for interactions to provided needed resources and educational support in over 12,400 peer-to-peer interactions in multiple languages including Spanish, Triqui, Mixteco, Zapoteco, and less frequently in English.

Primary source data was obtained from surveys distributed to 170 farmworkers and 36 employers of farmworkers between April 22, 2023, and May 16, 2023. These surveys are specifically designed to gather relevant information from the farmworker and employer populations, providing a current understanding of farmworkers' unique challenges and opportunities for improvement in Monterey County. It is important to note that our farmworker and employer surveys represent only a small snapshot of the broader farmworker workforce in Monterey County. Therefore, the data collected should be interpreted with caution and considered within its limitations. The survey provides valuable insights into certain aspects of the farmworker population, but it may not fully capture the entire spectrum of experiences and characteristics of all agricultural employers or farmworkers in the county.

KEY DATA ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

Monterey County Farmworkers: An Overview

The 2022 Agricultural Workers: Monterey County, California Occupation Report, developed by the Monterey County Workforce Development Board, provides valuable insights into the farmworker employment landscape in Monterey County. By analyzing U.S. Census data, as well as data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) and Census Zip Business Patterns (ZBP), the report offers a comprehensive picture of the county's agricultural employee demographics. While the Census data provides valuable information, it is not exhaustive and may not capture every individual within the population. According to the Agricultural Worker Report, in 2022, the county had a total of 41,704 agricultural workers, with a gender distribution of approximately 67% male and 33% female⁸. Furthermore, the report highlights that 87% of agricultural workers in the county identify as Hispanic or Latino. The top three occupations among these workers include Farmworkers and Laborers (Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse), Agricultural Equipment Operators, and Graders and Sorters of Agricultural Products². Additionally, the report reveals that the median age of agricultural workers is 36 years old, with 24.5% falling in the age range of 25 to 34, and 25.7% in the range of 35 to 44². These findings provide a comprehensive overview of the agricultural workforce in Monterey County, shedding light on gender distribution, primary occupations, and age demographics within the industry.

According to our employer farmworker survey, employers responding to our farmworker employer survey reported the majority of employees age ranged in age between 18 to 54 years specifically, most employers responding stating employees fall within the 35-44 age range (83%), and the 45-54 age range (81%) and 25-34 age range (76%), following similar trends to the Census data and the occupational report where farmworkers tend to be a younger population overall. Our employee survey of farmworkers also highlighted that 97% of respondents identified as Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin, emphasizing the substantial Hispanic representation within the farmworker population. We also wanted to gauge the primary languages used by employers to communicate with their farmworkers. We found that over 90% of respondents indicated communicating in Spanish, followed by English (41%). It was encouraging to see a small percentage of employers mentioned communicating in indigenous languages like Mixteco, Triqui, and Zapoteco, highlighting the presence of employers who prioritize effective communication by accommodating their employees' native language. However, due to the limited sample size of our survey, the prevalence or need for the use of indigenous languages for communication needs could be higher in our county. The findings emphasize the importance of considering language barriers and linguistic diversity when developing programs and services tailored to the specific needs of farmworkers.

It is important to note that our farmworker and employer surveys represents only a small snapshot of the broader farmworker workforce in Monterey County. Therefore, our survey data collected should be interpreted with caution and considered within its limitations. The survey provides valuable insights into certain aspects of the farmworker population, but it may not fully capture the entire spectrum of experiences and characteristics of all farmworkers or agricultural employers in the county.

Occupation Snapshot

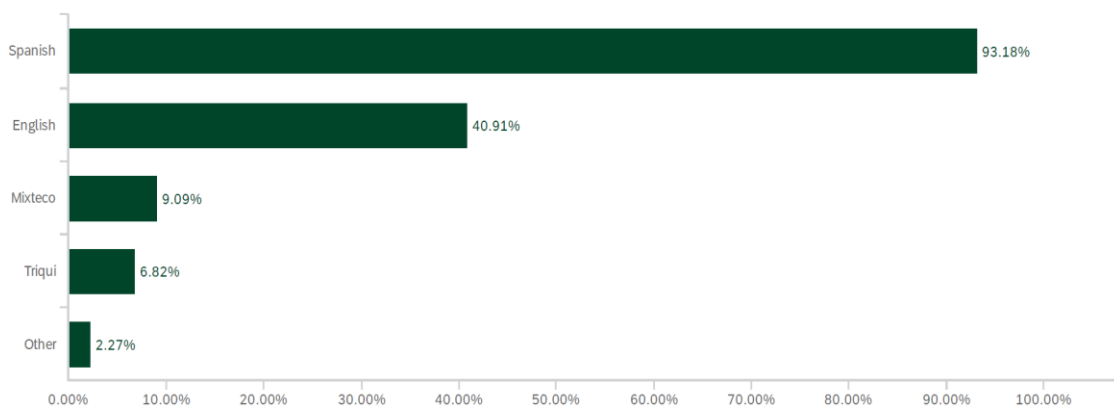
Source: 2022 Occupational Report: Agricultural Workers, Monterey County, California

| 6-Digit Occupation | Empl | Avg Mean Wages | LQ | 3-Year Empl Change | Annual Demand | Forecast Ann Growth |
|---|---------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse | 37,991 | \$32,500 | 50.54 | 821 | 6,550 | 0.5% |
| Agricultural Equipment Operators | 2,109 | \$37,400 | 27.36 | 3 | 396 | 1.5% |
| Graders and Sorters, Agricultural Products | 1,087 | \$29,900 | 22.50 | -89 | 167 | 0.5% |
| Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals | 245 | \$36,700 | 1.15 | 30 | 40 | -0.1% |
| Agricultural Workers, All Other | 155 | \$33,000 | 10.99 | -1 | 28 | 1.0% |
| Agricultural Inspectors | 113 | \$53,000 | 6.28 | -5 | 17 | 0.6% |
| Animal Breeders | 4 | \$44,200 | 0.62 | 1 | 1 | -0.3% |
| Agricultural Workers | 41,704 | \$32,800 | 36.91 | 759 | 7,200 | 0.6% |

The chart provides information on various occupations within the field of farmworking. It includes details such as the number of employees in each occupation, average wages, LQ, employment change over a three-year period, annual demand, and projected annual growth.

Primary Language used to communicate to farmworkers

Source: County of Monterey Health Department 2023 Farmworker Employer Survey



The bar graph illustrates the languages employees use to communicate to farmworkers in Monterey County based on data collected from the 2023 Farmworker Employer Survey conducted by the County of Monterey Health Department. The graph displays the different languages and the corresponding percentage of respondents within each category.



Household & Income Characteristics

The average household size for farmworkers in Monterey County was larger than the California average of 3.0 person per household, with 29% farmworker's households with six or more persons³. Within farmworker household, 70% lives in households with one or more children under the age of 18³. Most (92%) of California farmworkers report renting their primary residence³.

The average household size among farmworkers in Monterey County, as revealed from our farmworker survey, aligns closely with the California data on housing dynamics. Out of 124 respondents, 100 had children living with them. A total of 29 mentioned having two children under the age of 18 living with them, followed by one child (28), and then three children (20). These findings emphasize the presence of families within the farmworker population and the importance of considering their housing needs. Additionally, our survey indicated that 52% of respondents were married, 25% were living with a partner, and 13% had never been married. Considering the significant number of farmworker households with children, it is noteworthy that our employer survey highlighted the perceived need for early childhood education for the children of farmworkers as a top need.

In terms of household composition, respondents reported having a maximum of 10 individuals living in their households, with an average of 4 people per household. It is important to note that within the farmworker population, there is a prevalence of multiple households living under one roof. The CHNA highlights the prevalence of multi-generational living arrangements in Monterey County. Approximately 17% of residents have three or more generations residing in the same household³. Disparities in multi-generational living were observed across different areas within the county, with the Salinas area having the highest occurrence. Additionally, certain demographic groups, including women, younger residents, very low and low-income individuals, Hispanic persons, Asian persons, and LGBTQ+ respondents, were more likely to live in multi-generational households countywide³.

Farmworkers in the United States have an average annual salary of \$29,680, emphasizing the low-income nature of their profession. However, the 2022 snapshot of the Agricultural Worker report reveals an average salary of \$32,800, taking into account various occupations within the agricultural field, including higher-paying positions². This could explain the slightly higher wage average presented in this particular report. In our farmworker survey, we delved into estimated household incomes, pre-tax, and gathered the following data: 40% reported incomes ranging from \$10,000 to \$24,999, followed by 29% falling within the \$25,000 to \$49,999 range, and 20% reporting incomes below \$10,000.



The CHNA reported housing as one of the top 10 health issues in the county, underscoring the linkages between this social determinant and overall health. A large portion of respondents (44%) expressed concerns and stress about their ability to afford rent or mortgage payments in the past year, indicating financial instability³. Our farmworker survey also emphasized the importance of adequate and affordable housing as well as rental support in relation to housing and income characteristics. The following responses, shed light on why respondents perceive their overall quality of life in Monterey County in a particular way. Our survey also provided the opportunity for respondents to provide suggestions on how to address the challenges.

| Table 1: Examples of County of Monterey Health Department 2023 Farmworker Survey entries regarding quality of life in Monterey County | |
|--|---|
| Spanish Language Entry | English Language Translation/Entry |
| 1. "prque horita estamos batallando de la Vivienda" - | 1. "Because right now we are struggling with housing." |
| 2. "porque la renta esta mui alta los depocitos y tiene que pagar uno aseguransa donde bibe uno" - | 2. "Because the rent is very high, the deposits, and one has to pay insurance where one lives." |
| 3. "por que la renta es muy cara asi como la luz el agua y el salario no alcanza para tener un nivel de vida bueno" | 3. "Because the rent is very expensive, as well as electricity, water, and the salary is not enough to have a good standard of living." |
| 4. "por que es dificil conseguir casa, y en algunas viviendas de renta no permiten niños" - | 4. "Because it is difficult to find a house, and in some rental properties, children are not allowed." |
| 5. "que la renta sea menos cara ahorita todo se ha subido y ay poco trabajo en el fiel." | 5. "For the rent be less expensive, right now everything has gone up, and there is little work in the field." |
| 6. N/A | 6. "Housing Resources. Rent is very high a lot of Agricultural Workers that I know of are living in bad conditions that also affect (mental health) due to living circumstances." |
| 7. N/A | 7. Lower rent rates. Housing Opportunities. |

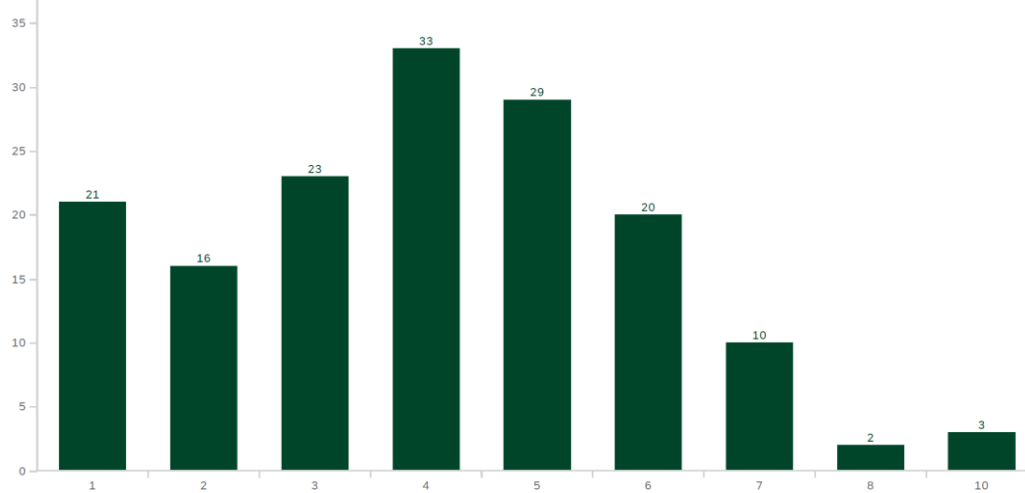
Such low household incomes have significant implications for farmworkers and their families. The financial constraints make it challenging for them to afford necessities, including food, rent, and other essential expenses. Many farmworkers face the hardship of stretching their limited income to cover these basic needs, often resulting in food insecurity and inadequate housing conditions. In the UC Merced Farmworker Health Study, 19% of respondents reported very low food security, 23% reported low food security, and 57% reported high or marginal food security⁴. In our 2022 CHNA report, South County had the highest prevalence at 52% food insecurity³.

Additionally, disparities in financial resilience were observed across different communities within Monterey County. According to the CHNA, of Monterey County residents, 31% report being unable to pay cash for a \$400 emergency expense without going into debt². This percentage increases in North County (33%), Salinas (34%), and South County (35%)². The limited financial security likely also limits

their ability to access healthcare services, education, and other opportunities that could help improve their overall quality of life. The income disparities and economic hardships experienced by farmworkers highlight the need for comprehensive support systems to address these challenges.

Household size

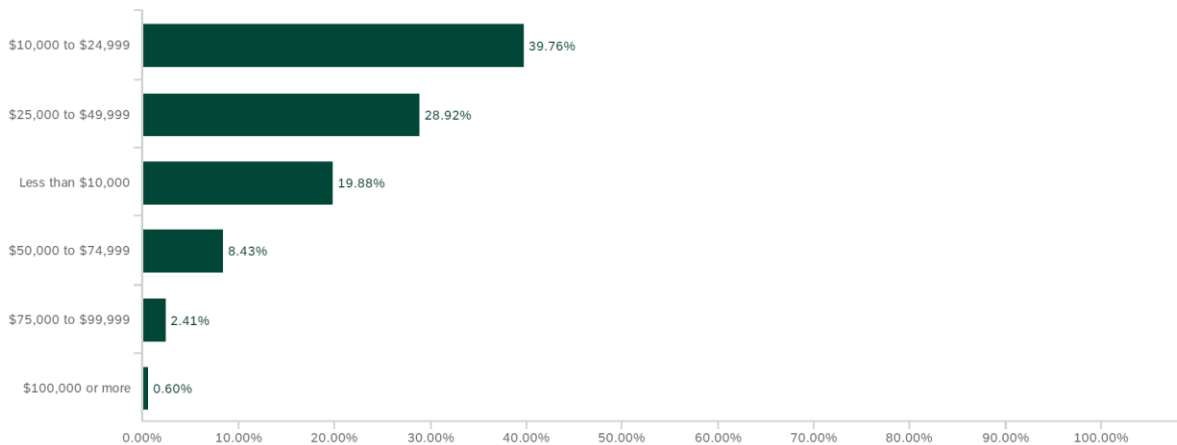
Source: County of Monterey Health Department 2023 Farmworker Population Assessment Survey



The bar graph illustrates the household size of farmworkers in Monterey County based on data collected from the 2023 Farmworker Survey conducted by the County of Monterey Health Department. The graph illustrates the number of people per household, ranging from 1 to 10, along with the corresponding count of respondents falling within each category.

Household income

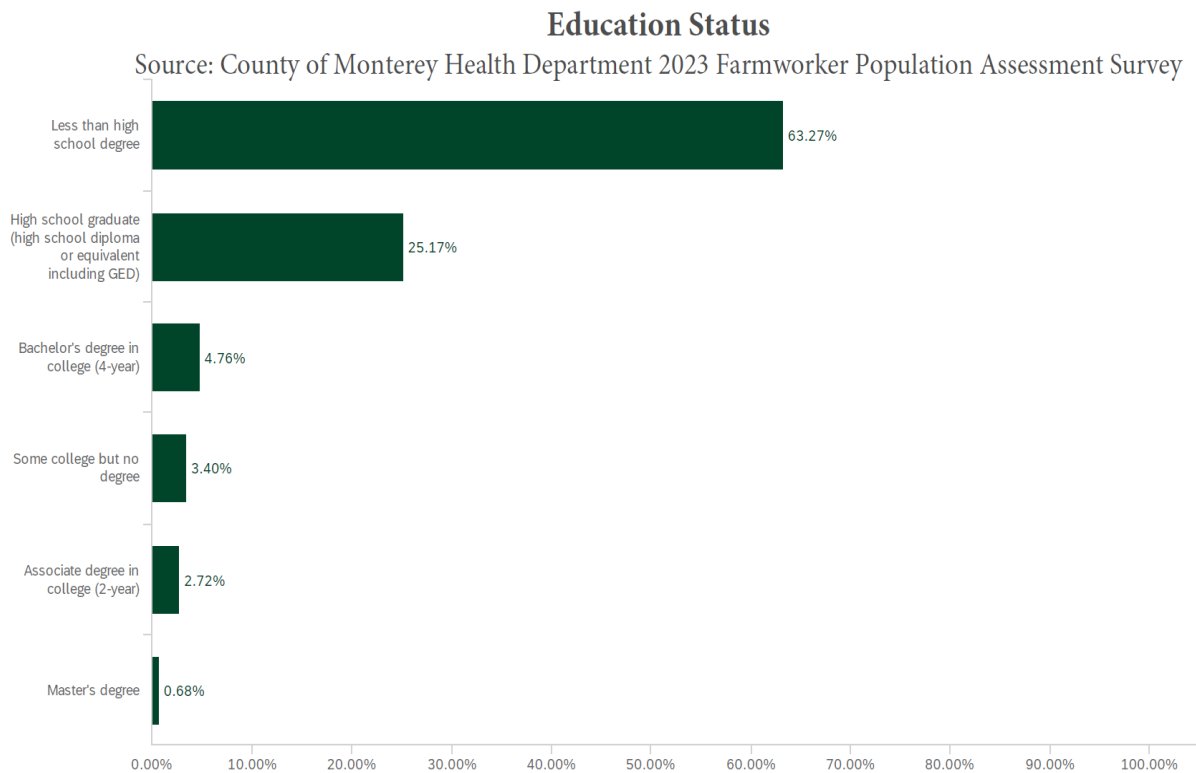
Source: County of Monterey Health Department 2023 Farmworker Population Assessment Survey



The bar graph illustrates the household income of farmworkers in Monterey County based on data collected from the 2023 Farmworker Survey conducted by the County of Monterey Health Department. The graph illustrates the different yearly salary (pre-tax) categories of farmworkers and the corresponding percentage of respondents within each category.

Farmworker Education

According to the CHNA report, 25% of Monterey County residents do not have a high school diploma². This is more than twice the national percentage (12%) and 40% higher than the state of California (16%)². In our farmworker survey, we obtained data from a diverse range of respondents. Among them, 63% stated that they had less than a high school degree. On the other hand, 25% reported having a high school diploma or equivalent, including a GED certificate. These data underscore the educational disparities present within the farmworker population in the county. Limited access to education and lower educational attainment levels can have negative impacts, affecting job opportunities, income potential, low health literacy and overall socio-economic well-being.



The bar graph illustrates the education status of farmworkers in Monterey County based on data collected from the 2023 Farmworker Survey conducted by the County of Monterey Health Department. The graph illustrates the educational/degree levels of farmworkers and the corresponding percentage of respondents within each level.

Health Care and Health Outcomes for Farmworkers

The CHNA 2022 report highlights various barriers to healthcare access in Monterey County. Among the barriers, appointment availability had the most significant impact on Monterey County adults. It is worth noting that all individual barriers to access were found to be worse in Monterey County compared to the national average². Disparities in barriers to healthcare access were observed across different regions of the county. In the South County area, the cost of a doctor visit and transportation were particularly impactful. In the Monterey Peninsula area, difficulty finding a physician posed a significant barrier. In the Salinas area, language and culture barriers were more pronounced. The North County area experienced higher impacts in terms of cost (doctor visit and prescriptions), appointment availability, and inconvenient hours. Another important finding is the percentage of adults who reported skipping or reducing medication doses in the past year to stretch their prescriptions and save costs². This indicates the financial challenges faced by individuals in accessing necessary medications. Similarly, in the UC Merced Farmworker Health Study, 49% of participants reported being without health insurance at some point in the previous 12 months, 23% reported delaying medical care at some point in the previous 12 months, and 39% of the participants reported needing an interpreter for a medical treatment, with 90 percent of those reporting receiving support³.



Based on our farmworker survey data, 24% of farmworker respondents reported being somewhat satisfied with their access to healthcare services. However, a significant proportion expressed varying levels of dissatisfaction, with respondents stating they were somewhat dissatisfied or extremely dissatisfied. Below are statements of respondents regarding access to health care:

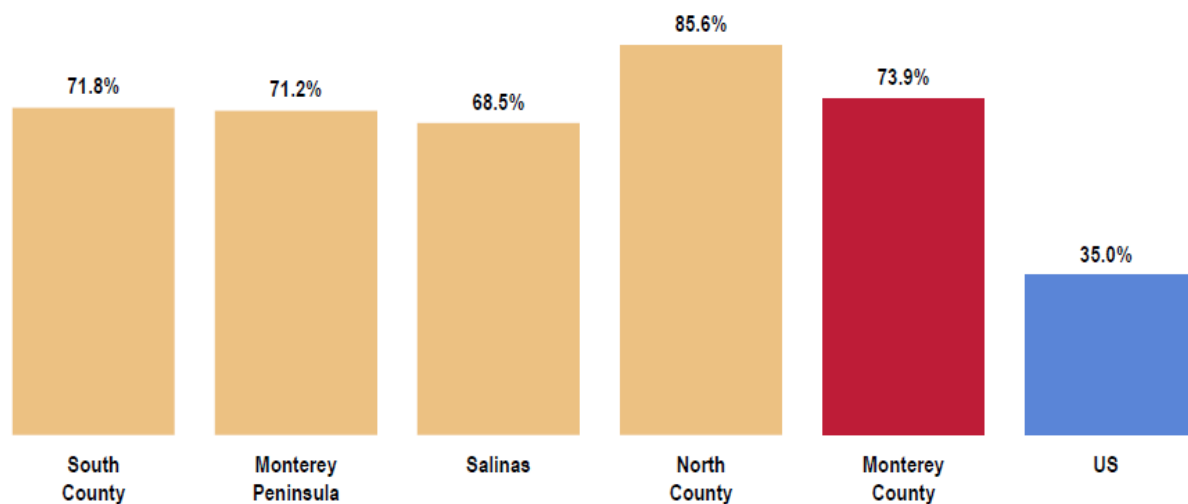
1. "porque no puedo acceder a servicios medico porque no soy elegible para medical" - Translation: "because I cannot access medical services because I am not eligible for medical insurance."
2. "Porque nosotras las personas que trabajamos en el campo ganamos un sueldo muy bajo y el costo de la vivienda, aseguranza y otros gastos son muy altos y es por esa razón que digo algo mal. Sin mencionar el costo médico y dental que no podemos tener acceso porque es muy caro" - Translation: "Because we, the people who work in the fields, earn a very low salary, and the cost of housing, insurance, and other expenses is very high, and that's why I say something is wrong. Not to mention the medical and dental cost that we cannot access because it is very expensive."
3. "porque no tenemos acceso a Salud Mental, nesecitamos un Centro recreativo no hay médicos especialistas en enfermedades crónicas! No tenemos viviendas disponibles las rentas están muy altas no podemos pagar cada mes no hay mercados de verduras y frutas orgánicas!" - Translation: "Because we do not have access to mental health, we need a recreational center, there are no specialized doctors in chronic diseases! We do not have available housing, rents are very high, we cannot afford to pay every month, and there are no organic vegetable and fruit markets!"

The data highlight the urgent need to improve healthcare access for farmworkers and develop localized solutions to address some of the specific challenges they face in accessing and navigating the healthcare system.

The UC Merced Farmworker Health Study showed farmworkers across California are facing serious health challenges on a daily basis. A notable health difference was higher rates of obesity reported for Salinas participants (61%) than other surveyed counties (45%)⁴. Other issues included 37 percent of men and 47 percent of women reported having at least one chronic condition, diabetes (20%), hypertension (19%) and anxiety (10%) being the most common⁴.

In the 2022 CHNA, South County, at 23%, had the highest percentage of people reporting their overall health was only “fair/poor”³. Chronic disease conditions are common in Monterey County, with 91% of South County respondents reporting at least one cardiovascular risk factor, while in Salinas the prevalence of diabetes/high blood sugar was 15%³. Conversely, both Salinas and South County residents tended to have lower prevalence for ability to buy fresh produce or participate in leisure time physical activity.

Experienced Difficulties or Delays of Some Kind in Receiving Needed Health Care in the Past Year



Sources: ● 2022 PRC Community Health Survey, PRC, Inc. [Item 140]
 ● 2020 PRC National Health Survey, PRC, Inc.

Notes: ● Asked of all respondents.
 ● Percentage represents the proportion of respondents experiencing one or more barriers to accessing health care in the past 12 months.

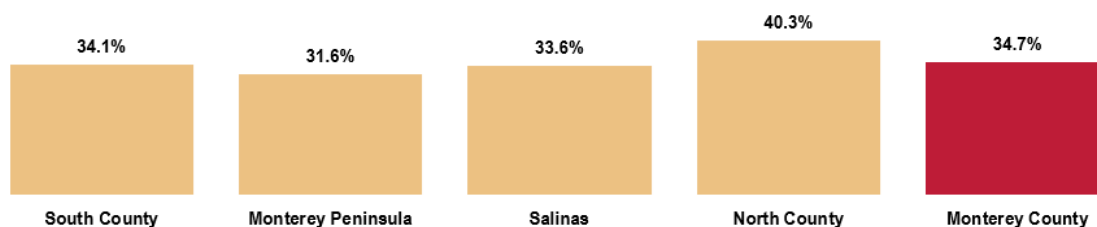
COVID-19 Pandemic Impact

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated systemic disparities in vulnerable communities, including farmworkers, throughout Monterey County, California. Thousands of Monterey County residents lost jobs, faced homelessness, and experienced difficulties obtaining or sustaining basic life needs for themselves and/or household members. Many individuals diagnosed or exposed to COVID-19 suffered

from the lack of access to consistent quality health care or resources to aid in proper quarantine and/or isolation. The quality of life in vulnerable communities along with health inequity and social injustice increased the likelihood of morbidity and mortality directly related to COVID-19.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, 62% of California farmworkers report difficulty paying for food or bills³. CHNA data revealed the significant financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Monterey County residents. Approximately 34.7% of survey respondents reported experiencing job loss, reduced hours or wages, or loss of health insurance within their household due to the pandemic³. Disparities in pandemic repercussions were observed across different regions of the county, with the North County area being particularly affected².

Household Member has Lost a Job, Hours/Wages, or Health Insurance as a Result of the Pandemic



Sources: ● 2022 PRC Community Health Survey, PRC, Inc. [Item 318]
Notes: ● Asked of all respondents.

As a response, County of Monterey Health Department developed the Virus Integrated Distribution of Aid (VIDA) program. The VIDA program, a collaborative effort with ten county community-based organizations and the Community Foundation of Monterey County, began serving vulnerable populations across the county in December 2020 using a Community Health Worker (CHW) model. By the end of 2022, the VIDA program reached over 12,500 interactions specifically with farmworkers across the county. VIDA CHWs met farmworkers at their place of employment over 150 times over the 2022 calendar year, assisting with over 2,000 on-site testing and registering individuals for vaccines, providing over 63,000 resource information and education materials, and directly connecting farmworkers and their families to over 17,000 needed resources to sustain basic life needs for themselves and/or household members. Of those assisted, 59% of interactions were in Spanish, 13% in Mixteco, 7% in Triqui, and 6% in Zapoteco. There were many needs identified through these interactions, including: access to health care; housing; digital access; utility assistance; transportation; financial support services; childcare; food, clothing, household goods, and hygiene products (e.g., diapers).

Environmental Hazards

Survey data from the UC Merced Farmworker Health Study found one in twelve California farmworkers reported working near pesticides and nearly one in six report environmental smoke made it difficult to breathe⁵. Occupational safety is a very real concern for farmworkers who experience occupational injuries at nearly twice the rate of other private sector workers.^{4,5} Occupational safety is a very real concern for farmworkers as 5% of fatal occupational injuries due to exposure to harmful substances or environmental exposures occur within the farming, fishing, or forestry occupations⁵.



In the CHNA, community feedback indicated that environmental contributors, particularly pesticides, are considered a concern in relation to prevalent respiratory diseases. Residents have expressed being affected by pesticides and other contaminants in the community³. The CHAMACOS study, referenced in the CHNA report, further supports this concern, linking pesticide use in agriculture to potential health impacts⁷. The widespread application of pesticides in agricultural fields raises concerns about pesticide drift, which can lead to cumulative exposures for communities residing near these fields, including children attending schools in close proximity. California has adopted regulations that address agricultural pesticide applications near public K-12 schools and licensed child day care centers. This presents an opportunity to provide continuous education on environmental and occupational safety to parents working in agriculture.

Conclusion

This comprehensive collection and analysis of Monterey County farmworkers reveals important insights into the needs and challenges faced by farmworkers in the county. All the aggregated data and reports consistently emphasize the need for adequate and affordable housing, access to healthcare, financial support, and social services, and also recognize that farmworkers often endure strenuous conditions and face disproportionate health risks.

The findings from the population assessments reinforce our framework for our outreach and service model design, ensuring that the specific needs of farmworkers are addressed going forward. The outreach methods will be based on the successes of the VIDA model, and include educational information distribution, outreach through strategic community efforts, direct services, and communication through multiple outlets (social media, radio, phone calls, text messages), and most importantly in person conversations. Methods around language access should be successful, because outreach is conducted in English, Spanish and other languages (Mixteco, Zapoteco, and Triqui) spoken by CHWs and often deliver information directly to farmworkers at their place of employment, before or after hours in local communities, or in other popular community locations. VIDA relationships and the trust that has been built to gain access to these locations will be leveraged and contribute to outreach success and rapid scale up. Radio ads or interviews will be used due to the common use of radios by work crews during the workday in the fields. Culturally appropriate language will be developed with CHWs and the local community to ensure farmworkers and their families are receiving the most concise

and useful messaging. MCHD has and will continue to use a successful feedback loop with CHWs as to the best messaging, outreach, and education practices to address identified health and social needs. FRC staff and partner CHWs are multilingual, offering services in English, Spanish, and Indigenous languages (Triqui, Mixteco, Zapoteco) with Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño (CBDIO) specializing in indigenous languages. Our commitment to language accessibility extends to all materials developed for community engagement, outreach, and education, ensuring they are available in these languages. In cases where unwritten languages are spoken, we will make efforts to provide videos and personalized one-on-one education. Our community partners have an extensive track history of an all-rounded approach of services to address language barriers. This approach is particularly crucial as our reports have highlighted the significant presence of non-English languages, including Spanish and indigenous languages, within our communities

The FRC model is based on our VIDA work during COVID response. That model is one where CHWs are deployed within communities, providing services from general information and education via tabling to case management. The CHWs provide monthly reports that include community needs that are being relayed to them by residents as part of outreach efforts. It also includes monthly assessment of outreach effort numbers to see where needs are increasing or decreasing. Monthly meetings with CHW leads from each CBO partner along with their monthly reports on accomplishments and challenges will also be a real-time process for tailoring services and programs to meet community needs. Other supports that are in place by MCHD and CFMC (as co-leads) and partners are providing ongoing trainings for CHWs and quickly adding new services based on community need. The FRC team will continue to develop and/or expand on current VIDA outreach and education methods and supports to address the needs identified by the Population Health Needs Assessment. Along with current outreach efforts and approaches, this will include continued development of a case management model to provide wraparound service connections and warm handoffs with a suite of service providers across the county. In addition, FRC partner organizations will provide community-based leadership training to support community empowerment processes to close access and service gaps through systems change efforts around access to care, education, housing, and economic security.

The CHW work will be 90% field outreach, 10% office. The program will initially have a drop station office in Greenfield which is in the Salinas Valley with partners using their office locations that are embedded in Monterey County cities with farmworker populations (Salinas, King City, Castroville) and with extensive reach into unincorporated Monterey County. As data shows, a large proportion of Monterey County's farmworker population lives in the Salinas Valley and South County region. MCHD and partners will conduct a monthly schedule of activities to link farmworkers with needed services. These will include, but not be limited to cafecitos and platicas for connecting to individuals, and direct service events, such as service application assistance events, food bank distribution events, and many others based on community needs. Farmworkers needing more specific supports and potential case management will be referred to a core referral team to do wrap-around case management. Cases will be managed with an MCHD Microsoft Forms and the United Way Monterey County Smart Referral Network software which connects to dozens of county service providers. Partners used both tools extensively during the VIDA program, connecting hundreds of farmworkers with income assistance, utility assistance, doing food drop offs directly to homes, and tracking referrals to successful service access.

Monthly meetings with CHW leads from each CBO partner along with their monthly reports on accomplishments and challenges will also be a real-time process for tailoring services and programs to meet community needs.

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