

April 2020

GOT FOOD?

T H A N K A F A R M W O R K E R !

NFWM News & Actions

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Coronavirus: the latest

THE EFFECTS ON FARM WORKERS AND
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Pandemic Shines Light On Inequities And Systemic Realities

For the last few months, the societal effects of Covid-19 have made it nearly impossible to ignore the inequities that have always permeated and sustained American systems. As we continue to witness the impact of this pandemic on farm workers, we see that these inequalities are the very forces holding

together the U.S. food system. Everybody needs to eat which is why farm workers are considered "essential"—they are still picking strawberries in California's fields and bringing in milk from New York's dairy farms. And as usual the government has done very little to protect their health and safety, their incomes, and their children.

On April 15th, the [first coronavirus case](#) of a seasonal farm worker was confirmed in eastern North Carolina. But while farm workers are currently [left out of federal aid packages](#), farm worker unions and organizations are [responding to these vulnerabilities](#) with resiliency and intelligence—as they have always done and will continue to do. For decades, farm workers have voiced their experiences of low wages, wage theft, threats to health, inaccessible health care, sexual harassment, child labor and poor housing conditions. With the devastating impacts of climate change on the horizon, we are also seeing farm workers report heat illness, housing damage from natural disasters, forced migration, increased pesticide usage and contaminated water sources. What is both unsurprising and horrifying is that the federal government continues to subsidize the conventional farming methods that have created these dangerous working and living conditions. We need farm workers to be able to work and yet we are allowing their workplaces to become increasingly uninhabitable. The Covid-19 crisis has highlighted these issues even more.

What's Going On

The first Covid-19 Stimulus package has left farm workers invisible. See the HEAL Food Alliance's analysis: <https://healfoodalliance.org/heal-food-alliance-Covid-19-stimulus-package/>

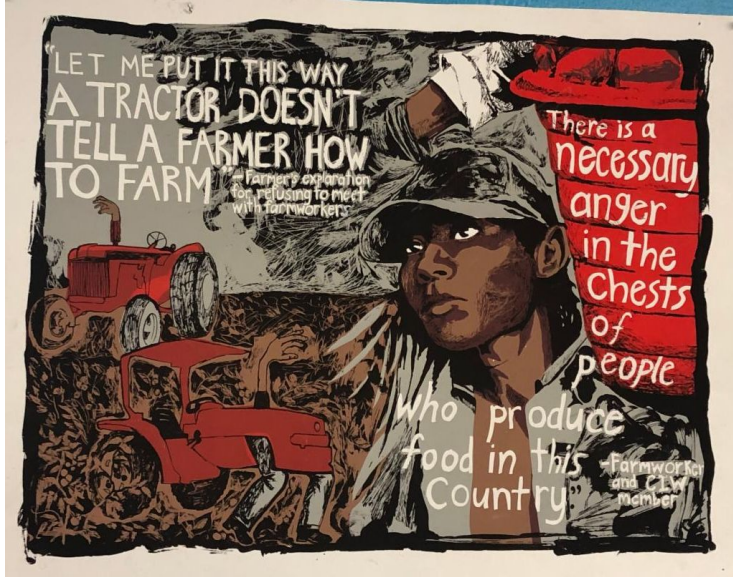
The second stimulus package is more of the same.

In Washington State, farm workers are suing the state for failing to protect farm workers from the coronavirus. The UFW, AFL-CIO and Familias Unidas por la Justicia joined together to bring the suit. <https://www.businessinsider.com/unions-sue-washington-state-over-farm-worker-treatment-during-pandemic-2020-4>

What Can You Do?

United Farm Workers (UFW):

A [petition](#) to stop the current administration from lowering farm worker wages during Covid-19 is also being promoted by the Farmworker Association of Florida.



(CIW)

Sign a [petition](#) to Governor Ron DeSantis (Florida): Take all possible steps to protect farm workers in Immokalee from the COVID-19 pandemic and also call the Governor's office. Instructions are included below the petition.

Greg Asbed, CIW Co-

Founder, wrote an [OpEd](#) for the New York Times to address the urgent nature of protecting farm workers: "What Happens if America's 2.5 Million Farmworkers Get Sick?"

Farmworker Association of Florida (FWAF):

Add your name to a [petition](#) by the Food Chain Workers Alliance, Front Line Food Workers Need Protections.

Antonio Tovar, Executive Director of FWAF, is quoted in an [article](#): "Pre-existing conditions, no sick leave and health insurance put farm workers at increased coronavirus risk."

Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN):

PCUN recognizes that child care, state and local, has been challenging both for availability as well as affordability. During the current pandemic, child care issues are emerging both for safety and for their need especially for "essential workers". Ask lawmakers to fight for child care providers and the families they serve (With Family Forward Action): [Take Action on Child Care](#). [Read more](#) about the unique challenges facing farm workers and their children.

FUNDS FOR FARM WORKERS

While the National Farm Worker Ministry does not usually ask for funds, we have been contacted by supporters about where they can provide funds that will benefit farm workers directly during the pandemic to provide food, income and protection.

Financial Gifts: Specifically For Needs During Covid-19

The Emergency Pandemic Fund for Farmworkers is co-sponsored by Justice for Migrant Women and Hispanics in Philanthropy to raise immediate funds to help keep farm worker families safe from Covid-19 as they perform essential work to feed us. This fund includes as beneficiaries the Farmworker Association of Florida, UFW Foundation, Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste, La Union del Pueblo Entero, Student Action with Farmworkers as well as others. All funds raised will go directly to farm workers to help them purchase basic needs for their families, like groceries and hygienic supplies; pay for utilities and other expenses; and assistance to offset medical costs and

to aid in purchasing medical supplies. <https://hipgive.org/project/farmworkers-Covid-19-pandemic-r>

As always, funds for ongoing advocacy focused on systemic change do not meet immediate needs but are consistent with the mission of NFWM and greatly appreciated by all our farm worker partners, allies and by us.

FOR A MORE COMPLETE LIST OF WAYS TO GIVE, SEE [HERE](#)

NFWM RESPONDS TO THE PANDEMIC

NFWM, at the request of the Rural Women's Health Project of Gainesville, FL, signed on to a letter by the Southern Poverty Law Center to Florida's Governor Ron DeSantis. This asks for Title VI compliance to provide meaningful access and language assistance to the hundreds of thousands of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals in Florida for access to federally-funded emergency aid, programs, benefits, and assistance. Most resources being released now are only in English. In emergency situations, information and resources need to be accessible to everyone. Anything less is a violation of Civil Rights. [The letter signed by the ministry:](#)

https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/lawg_-_Covid19_gov_desantis_letter.pdf

Sam Trickey, NFWM board member and long time farm worker supporter wrote an OpEd for the Gainesville Sun to highlight the absence of farm workers in the public discourse: <https://www.gainesville.com/opinion/20200409/samuel-b-trickey-were-not-tractors-were-persons>

The Presbyterian Hunger Program, one of NFWM's member organizations, has dedicated webpages (created by Andrew Kang Bartlett, NFWM Board member): "To Support Farm Workers (and Undocumented Residents) During This Crisis" <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/food-faith/cv19-farmworkers/>

To keep up with NFWM's ongoing efforts/information/actions related to the pandemic, go to <http://nfwm.org/news/coronavirus-the-latest/>



Farm Worker Updates

Florida Farm Worker Legislation

In Florida agricultural concerns, last month Florida Senate Bill SB 664 "Verification of Employment Eligibility" passed and went to Gov. DeSantis for his signature. It says that while public employers must use the eVerify system, private employers may either use eVerify or keep 3 years of records to verify I-9s. This discrepancy provides an opportunity for the private sector to avoid closer scrutiny of documents. Governor Santis has not yet signed the bill into law. <https://www.wuft.org/news/2020/04/20/e-verify-opponents-and-supporters-wait-as-desantis-begins-to-sign-bills/>

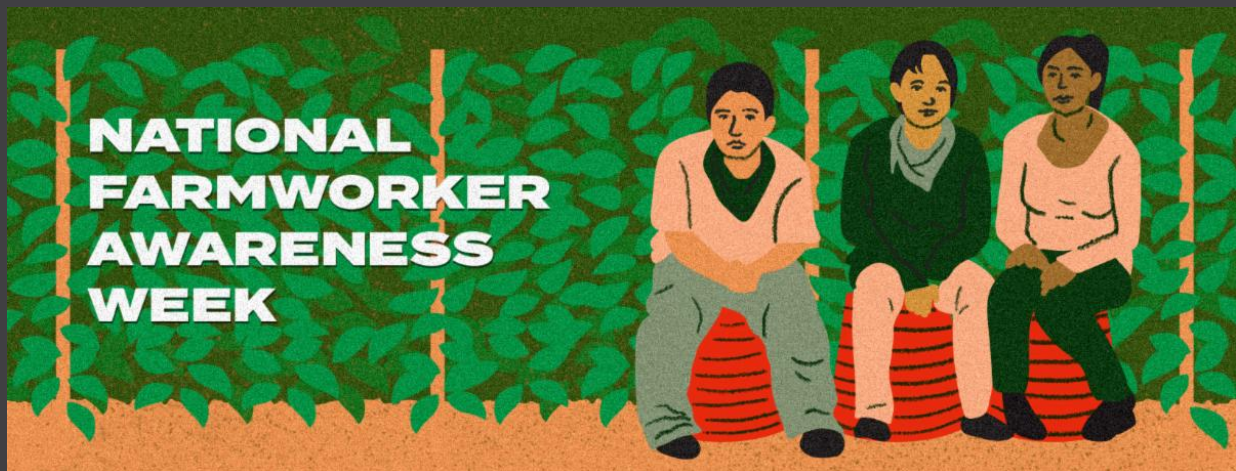
A Story Narrative of a Child Farm Worker and Access to College

Education is a major concern for farm worker families and one of the driving forces around the success of the Dreamers. Education is what many farm worker parents consider a "better life" for their children. We applaud teachers in farm worker communities, especially those that are part of the migratory stream or in seasonal farming areas, who often work to overcome the end of the year/beginning of the year absences of farm worker kids by planning their

academic year curriculum to accommodate that. And we are grateful for the teachers who recognize the extreme tiredness of farm worker children who go to work in the fields early in the morning and then again after school during the school year. These students do better in the afternoons and have a difficult time completing homework so the compassionate efforts of teachers to accommodate these realities are vital to the success of children who are farm workers themselves. A lack of support for languages other than English, tracking, racism, and economic challenges all play into their struggles.

The story of Sergio Arroyos is an example of how and why the US education system does not work well for many immigrant farm worker children, or for immigrant children in general. See Sergio's story:

<http://nfwm.org/news/sergios-story/>. More information about education and farm workers: <http://nfwm.org/farm-workers/farm-worker-issues/education/>



National Farmworker Awareness Week

www.farmworkerawareness.org

National Farmworker Awareness Week (NFAW) is an annual week of action for students and community members to raise awareness about farm worker issues. In 2020 we celebrated the 21st Annual National Farmworker Awareness Week to raise awareness about farm worker conditions and to honor their important contributions to us every day!

NFWM supported this effort by participating via social media. We took a day of the week to highlight our work through the "Pasa la Papa" Instagram campaign, posting about "Shade" throughout the day on March 27. Many thanks to our intern, Hanna Stamey, for coordinating this effort! These posts not only spread the word about our important work but also helped us gain Instagram followers. Be sure to follow us, too, at

<https://www.instagram.com/nationalfarmworkerministry/>



NFWM: Stay Connected!

In the coming weeks NFWM will be switching to a new communications system in order to stay better connected with YOU! Please be patient with us during this time of transition. Help us make sure we have the best addresses for you....if this isn't reaching you at

your preferred address, please "unsubscribe" following the link at the bottom, then go to our web site, scroll all the way to the bottom and sign up using your correct email address. Additionally, please make sure we have your correct mailing/postal address so you can receive our newsletters, financial updates, and more: [Email us!](#)

Other ways to stay connected with NFWM:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/nfwministry/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/nationalfarmworkerministry/>

Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/nfwm/>

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXI6ldQIXpjV16DSb735W9Q>

Share these links with your online friends!

THANK YOU for Taking Action!

NFWM has been sending you Action Alerts, including focused geographic requests as well as nationwide calls to action. You've responded in amazing ways.

The latest action alerts can be found on our web site:
<http://nfwm.org/category/action-alerts/>

Please keep it up...YOU make the difference!!!

**Like our farm worker partners and allies,
your financial donations during this time are
CRITICAL to keep us going.**

We'll keep it simple. The easiest and safest way to support the National Farm Worker Ministry and our work is to give online:

DONATE to NFWM TODAY!

NFWM Supports these boycotts led by our Farm Worker Partners:
We hope you will, too!

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National Farm Worker Ministry | 919.807.8707 | nfwm@nfwm.org | nfwm.org

STAY CONNECTED

