

DEFINITION

The North Carolina Farmworker Health Program embraces the definition used by the Bureau of Primary Care, which defines outreach as...

“Case finding, education, or other services to identify potential clients and/or facilitate access/referral of clients to available services.”

‘Y’ OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

For the North Carolina Farmworker Health Program, outreach is an enabling service carried out by program coordinators, outreach workers, student interns, AmeriCorps members, and/or community volunteers. The primary focus of those assigned outreach activities are to go to where farmworkers live, work and congregate to inform them of available services and the way in which they can access those services. This includes scouting for farmworker camps/residencies and conducting visits at the homes or fields.

Ultimately, outreach efforts will increase the accessibility, acceptability, and appropriateness of available health services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the area. Outreach is considered an integral part of any healthcare system. In addition to getting farmworkers to health centers, outreach workers play key roles in connecting farmworker communities to health services. Outreach staff complement and do not replace other health center staff.

Program Coordinators, along with program staff, follow the guidelines and Healthcare Plan proposed by NCFHP for each season. They set additional goals on the number of new farmworkers and/or camps they want to reach for the season. Outreach workers are encouraged to be familiar with this count and to monitor progress made toward the desired goal set by the program.

On occasions, outreach staff may also find themselves in a situation in that they need to respond to emergency/immediate situations while visiting a farmworker residence or place of work. Outreach staff are encouraged to be trained in First Aid and CPR as well as keep a First Aid kit in their car at all times, along with a list of phone numbers for emergency contacts. Chapter 5: Responding to Health Concerns of this manual outlines protocols outreach staff can follow when responding to emergency/immediate need situations.

All outreach activities may lead toward the provision of other enabling services, such as completing a health assessment/screening, providing health education, case management, etc.

Scouting for Camps/Farmworker Recruitment

Scouting for camps, also known as case-finding or client recruitment, is a crucial first step. It entails actively seeking out farmworkers in the community, mapping their location, documenting camp information using the site register, and recording camp information onto the program’s mapping system and into FHASES. Individual Health Assessments are completed for new and existing farmworkers and family members.

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The primary purpose of an outreach worker is to identify where farmworkers work or live, visit farmworker homes/fields, and promote clinic services, but they also assist with health assessments, health education, case management, interpretation, transportation, referral, service coordination, and other needed services.

Outreach workers are key persons in finding locations in the area that migrant farmworkers patronize (e.g. local grocery store). Proprietors can be asked to cooperate by passing out information about the clinic and the services offered. Bilingual notices about the clinic can also be placed on community bulletin boards, public telephones, Laundromats, etc.

Traditionally, migrant farmworkers travel in groups and often live in an old house, an old trailer, or barrack facilities located somewhere on the grower's property. Some farmworkers, especially those who work at nurseries and greenhouses, may have their own individual living arrangements, where they rent a trailer in a trailer park or a small house on some other property. The terms "camp" and "site" are used interchangeably when referring to a location where farmworkers live.

Farmworker housing is often hidden behind farms and at the end of dirt roads. Farmworkers themselves may have trouble telling you where they live, and some growers may be hesitant to share this information.

Depending upon your situation and area, and with good planning, time, patience, and some diplomacy, there are a number of ways to identify farmworker sites, such as:

- ***Review Grower Lists/Registers***

Names of growers and nurseries hiring agricultural workers in your area may be obtained by contacting the NC Department of Labor, the North Carolina Growers Association (NCGA), the NC Employment Security Commission, the County Cooperative Extension, and the County Health Department.

On occasions, these agencies have representatives assigned to the area. If available, contact the representative to introduce yourself and your program to him/her. They may be willing to accompany you to some of the sites they are familiar with. You may also check the yellow pages under farms, farm bureaus, nurseries, etc.

Note: Remember that these lists keep a record of farmer addresses in the area. Farmer addresses may be different from that of farmworkers, who may or may not live a farmer's property. Lists from the NC Department of Labor are only for registered camps and migrant housing. Lists from the NC Grower's Association are only for farmers with H2A workers.

Some outreach staff has taken it upon themselves to report any unregistered camps to the North Carolina Department of Labor. Each Program Coordinator and staff members must determine for themselves if they want to report unregistered camps and set up a method to do so. Camps may be reported anonymously.

- ***Review farmworker records from previous years***

If you are working with an established farmworker program, you may find information on farmworker camps/residencies from the program's mapping system, the previous season's site registers, and/or old client records with detailed, easy-to-read directions on how to get there. More likely, you will find several methods of documentation of varying levels of quality. Remember this when you are documenting your own outreach!

- ***Contact with your organization's clinic/program staff***

On occasions, your organization's clinic/program staff may come in contact with farmworkers that have accessed your center's services on their own. It is important to set up in advance a process for clinic staff to inform you of farmworkers in the area. You may also want to set up a relationship and/or process with your clinic's social workers, caseworkers, and/or financial assistance officers, anyone that determines eligibility for Medicaid, Medicare, and other assistance programs.

- ***Contact other agencies serving farmworkers***

It is possible that other agencies in your area conduct outreach and/or document where farmworkers work/reside. Contact agencies that may be providing services to farmworkers in your area such as the Employment Security Commission, Cooperative Extension, Telamon, the Farmworker Labor Organizing Committee, Migrant Education, Migrant Head Start, etc.

- ***Conduct visual sightings/drive-bys***

A lot of farmworker contacts are serendipitous. You will be driving along and see some farmworkers sitting outside a trailer. With some experience you will be able to spot "clues" such as work clothes hanging on a clothing line, Florida license plates, etc.

- ***Other farmworkers and/or crew leaders***

Your best sources of information are other farmworkers and crew leaders that you already know. Many times they know where other groups of farmworkers live. They may be willing to drive you to and even introduce you to them! This is a good opportunity for developing friendships and identifying leaders and potential lay health promoters. Growers may be willing for you to talk to farmworkers at the worksite, particularly about topics related to health and safety.

Home/Field Visits

Home/Field Visits refer to contact made by outreach staff with farmworkers in their place of residence or employment. A visit to a farmworker must be made with a purpose, whether it is a first visit to make a new contact, to share clinic information, and/or to conduct health assessments, or additional visits to the site to build rapport, strengthen relationships of trust, provide health education, case management, and/or follow up. Staff must identify himself/herself by giving his/her name and that of their agency, and should state the purpose of their visit at all times.

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The visit to a farmworker camp will reveal much about the camp residents and the living situation. Camp residents may be all young Mexican males, or they may be a couple of local workers. A single family may return to the same small farm every year, or a crew of thirty men may live in barracks, or they may be different individuals each season. An outreach worker will confront various camp situations. Safety precautions must be taken when visiting camps. See Outreach Safety Checklist at the end of the chapter.

When visiting a camp for the first time, outreach workers must gather basic information about the site and its residents. An outreach worker can find out approximately how many people live at the camp, and what time they usually finish working. After a brief introduction, the outreach worker can also describe the clinic services and leave fliers containing directions, clinic hours of operation, and a business card with the phone number of the outreach worker. Individual health assessments may be completed on some or all of the residents or another time may be arranged (preferably in the near future) to return to complete individual screenings and present health information.

During follow-up visits the outreach worker has greater opportunity to build trusting relationships with farmworkers. Generally, more than one visit is necessary to build rapport. It is important for the outreach worker to set aside time to talk with farmworkers and not rush through conversations or activities.

Home visits may also allow for time to conduct individual health screenings and/or for farmworkers to reveal particular health concerns. Screenings like blood pressure, vision tests, etc. may be conducted not only to provide the screening but as a kind of icebreaker and relationship builder. Follow-up visits may also provide a great opportunity for health education. Group presentations can be short and simple, or longer and in depth, depending on the topic and interest of the farmworker. Videos or other visual aids may be used.

Outreach staff must use effective interpersonal techniques, always being attentive and respectful of farmworkers and their homes. Even if an outreach worker is familiar with a farmworker family, he/she must remember to knock and wait to be invited in before entering a farmworker's home. Staff must be sensitive to the fact that they may be arriving at a time when farmworkers are preparing to sit down for a meal or are not ready to receive them. Remember to ask if it's a good time to visit before continuing on with conversations, assessments, and other outreach activities.

Visiting field sites can be somewhat challenging. If this is your first initial visit, you may need to go in the early morning hours to establish contact with the crew leader. Once contact is made, you can coordinate with the crew leader a time to meet the workers in the fields before they start work. While they are waiting to go into the fields, your outreach team can use this time to do outreach or health education. This is a good method of outreach for certain crops that need to dry before they are picked like blueberries and tobacco. Workers may gather as early as 6:00 am to begin work, but may not be able to start work until 8:00 am. The outreach worker or team just needs to be flexible. Sometimes you may have two hours for outreach and other times you will only have 30 minutes. Use the time to also network with the workers and establish new contacts that could lead to new camps or housing sites. Some general rules for conducting outreach in the fields are to be aware of no trespassing signs. The permission of the crew leader may be enough to allow you into the fields,

but it would also be helpful to speak personally with the grower. Go by their office or give them a call and explain the purposes of outreach, they more than likely be understandable as long as it doesn't interfere with work.

NCFHP Program Coordinators may evaluate outreach staff by using Farmworker Feedback Surveys and/or accompanying staff on outreach. This is a requirement of all NCFHP funded sites.

Promoting Clinic Services

Outreach staff provides important information about available clinic services and how to access them. Whether encountering farmworkers for the first time and/or referring to other health or social services, outreach staff should:

- Share, in both verbal and written form, information about medical and enabling services available in their area and how to access them
- Share/post brochures, flyers, and/or posters that describe clinic services, hours, and cost to farmworkers. Contact information must be provided, preferably that of the Program Coordinator and/or outreach workers in the area. If needed, contact must be bilingual and familiar with farmworker communities. Also provide hotline numbers for “Call for Health” Toll free: 1-888-422-7352, the NC Department of Health and Human Services’ (NC DHHS) Customer Service Center at 1-800-662-7030 (English/Spanish) and other helpful resources.
- Post signs and/or information about 24-hour services and on what to do “after hours” if a medical need arises. Remember to list emergency numbers and location of urgent care centers and hospitals.
- Make presentations to other healthcare centers, social service agencies, and other community organizations about your farmworker program and clinic services. These agencies can help refer farmworkers to your program and vice versa.

As an added touch, some Program Coordinators/Outreach Workers leave camps with a folder that contains information about the clinic and its services, a map of its location, instructions on what to do in an emergency, health brochures, pictures of commonly used medications, and other helpful information. The folder is labeled with the camp's address and identification number as well as the name and number of the farmworker health program contact in the area.

Some may also provide first aid kits containing the commonly used over-the-counter medications. Area volunteers and churches may help put these together.

See Appendix II: Field Kits for a list of medications and supplies to include in the First Aid Kit.

NCFHP Outreach Safety Tips

Due to the nature of working independently in the community and camps, reasonable safety precautions should be taken. It is advised that staff conducting outreach and/or other needed services outside the clinic consider the following safety precautions:

- Review the health center's safety policy. It may include prohibitions against working or traveling alone or after dark.
- Conduct first site visits with another individual, if possible.
- Have a plan of the places you are going to visit, how to get there, and how to get home or back to the office from the last place on your route.
- Wear appropriate dress to ensure/reflect that you are a representative of the clinic.
- Honk car horn when you arrive to a new camp.
- Keep the car door unlocked while you are out assessing the area and/or approaching residents.
- Have a reliable vehicle and know your agency's protocols regarding automobile breakdowns and accidents.
- Carry a county and/or state map at all times.
- Carry a cell phone at all times.
- Have your keys ready.
- If dark when leaving a location, have a flashlight or ask the workers to accompany you to your car.
- Leave a camp if upon arrival you find that individuals are or have been drinking, or using drugs.
- Follow your instincts. If you feel unsafe at any time, leave the area or camp.
- Child/infant car seats and use of seat belts should be required and provided by the health center for outreach use.

DOCUMENTATION

Upon identifying a new farmworker camp/residence, the outreach worker must:

- Complete a site register
- Plot the new site by using the program's existing mapping system, paper or electronic
- Add new camp/residence to NCFHP FHASES database

When visiting farmworkers, outreach workers must make a home/field visit with a purpose and document their visit by using:

- The Individual Health Assessment
- The Enabling Encounter Form

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

The Program Coordinator, as well as staff assigned to outreach, may use the following questions to evaluate their performance in accordance to NCFHP's expectations and standards.

- Did the number of farmworkers/new camps identified for the season meet or exceed the goal set by the site for the year?
- Does the site have at least a paper mapping system of the camps in its service area?
- Is the program's mapping system easy to use and accurate when locating farmworker camps/residences?
- Has a site register been completed for all camps plotted on the map?
- Does each complete site register have the address, directions, and map to the site?
- Did the outreach worker knock and wait to be invited inside before entering a farmworker home?
- Did the worker identify him/herself when entering a farmworker camp for the first time or when meeting a farmworker for the first time?
- Did the outreach worker ask if it's a good time to visit before proceeding with conversations and other outreach activities?
- Did the outreach worker share clinic information, informing about clinic services, location, cost, languages spoken, transportation available, and other pertinent information regarding the clinic?
- Was a brochure or flyer provided with coordinator's contact information and map/directions to the clinic?
- Was information shared about after-hours care and process for getting urgent services?
- Was an individual health assessment conducted?
- Did outreach worker follow proper protocol when managing certain health conditions needing immediate care?

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- Did the outreach worker use the required form to document his/her visit to a farmworker site?
- Did the farmworker feedback survey report a satisfactory rating regarding outreach services?