



# Monterey County

**Item No.**

## Board Report

Board of Supervisors  
Chambers  
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor  
Salinas, CA 93901

**Legistar File Number: 22-088**

February 01, 2022

**Introduced:** 1/18/2022

**Current Status:** Agenda Ready

**Version:** 1

**Matter Type:** General Agenda Item

- a. Receive a report in response to **Board Referral No. 2021.19** seeking to create a Farmworker Resource Center that provides services and referrals in the community of Greenfield CA.
- b. Identify and provide funding for staff to move forward with the creation of a farmworker Resource Center in the community of Greenfield, CA.
- c. Direct staff to pursue AB 941 funding
- d. Provide further direction, as appropriate.

### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a. Receive a report in response to **Board Referral No. 2021.19** seeking to create a Farmworker Resource Center that provides services and referrals in the community of Greenfield CA.
- b. Identify and provide funding for staff to move forward with the creation of a farmworker Resource Center in the community of Greenfield, CA.
- c. Direct staff to pursue AB 941 funding
- d. Provide further direction, as appropriate.

### SUMMARY:

Board Referral No. 2021.19 (Lopez) In order to better serve the farm working population of Southern Monterey County, this referral directs the Agricultural Commissioner's Office to research and come back to our Board of Supervisors with options and feasibility for locating a Farmworker Resource Center in the community of Greenfield to leverage the opportunity of matching dollars in the recently signed AB941, at a 3:1 ratio, provides a great incentive for our County to develop a resource center in a community that lacks direct access to County services, while continuing to face access barriers, such as transportation.

### **Additional Information:**

AB 941- Farmworker Assistance: Resource Centers.

A recently signed Assembly Bill (AB) 941 (Bennett and Rivas) requires the Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) to establish a grant program for counties to establish farmworker resource centers that provide farmworkers and their families information and access to services related to labor and unemployment rights, education, housing, immigration, and health and human services. Such grant provides a leverage opportunity to Counties of matching dollars at a 3:1 ratio to establish farmworker centers, at a brick-and-mortar location or through a mobile center to conduct outreach

directly to farmworker communities. AB 941 would also require convening a workgroup to help inform the establishment and administration of the grant program and encouraged to provide services in additional languages, other than English or Spanish. In Monterey County, for example, there are farmworker populations speaking the following native languages of Mexico: Mixtec, Triqui, Purepecha, Chatino and Zapotec.

California recognizes farmworkers are essential to our state and that without our farmworkers, there would be no agricultural industry. However, farmworkers often face obstacles and without supportive services, they are a vulnerable population. AB 941 was adopted to allow for local government to better support the needs and rights of farmworkers and their families by providing resources at centers. The Farmworker Resource Grant Program outlined in AB 941 is modeled by Ventura County's successful Farmworker Resource Program housed within the Human Resource Agency since 2017.

DISCUSSION:

To learn what services should be provided, the Agricultural Commissioner staff conducted outreach to United Way of Monterey County, Monterey County Health Department, the Virus Integrated Distribution of Aid (VIDA) Project, Monterey County Department of Social Services, and the Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indigena Oaxaqueño (CBDIO).

To explore the feasibility of a Farmworker Resource Center in the Greenfield community, staff consulted with Monterey County Public Works, Facilities and Parks, the Ventura County Farmworker Resource Program staff, the Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, and Ventura County growers.

Additionally, a conversation with the Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture Karen Ross regarding Agricultural Commissioners statewide participating in farmworker resource centers and their creation was held at her invitation.

The following is key information gathered from these agencies:

United Way Monterey County - Staff contacted United Way Monterey County for assistance in identifying the expressed needs and the unmet needs in the City of Greenfield. United Way reported that the top expressed needs were as follow and without any specific order:

- Rent payment assistance
- Food pantries
- Electric service payment assistance
- Water service payment assistance
- Gas service payment assistance
- General Legal Aid & Food Stamps/SNAP
- Low Income/subsidized rental housing & disaster related cash grants

Similarly, United Way provided those needs that were not able to be met and are as follow:

- Rent/mortgage payment assistance
- General appliance provision

- Utility assistance
- Discounted utility services
- Developmental assessment
- Developmental disabilities day habilitation programs
- Psychiatric Case Management
- Disaster related cash grants

Monterey County Department of Social Services - Staff contacted and consulted with the Monterey County Department of Social Services (MCDSS) which provided the following information. MCDSS promotes the social and economic self-reliance of individuals and families in Monterey County through employment services, temporary financial assistance, social support services, protective services to children, dependent adults and seniors, and partnerships with the community to develop and support personal responsibility and self-sufficiency. Programs and functions include:

- Community Benefits, which provides eligibility services for Medi-Cal health insurance, CalFresh nutrition assistance, CalWORKs through cash aid to families with children, and General Assistance to indigent adults.
- Family and Children Services which provides child abuse and neglect prevention, assesses, and investigates referrals of child abuse and neglect, supports adoptions and other permanency resources when reunification is not possible, and provides independent living skills services for older youth who are in care or emancipating to independence.
- CalWORKs Employment Services which administer the Welfare-to-Work Employment Program providing self-sufficiency services to CalWORKs customers. This includes childcare, job search support, skill building, wage subsidies, and services to overcome barriers related to housing, mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence.
- Aging and Adult Services which administers the Adult Protective Services (APS) Program to address abuse and dependent adult exploitation, In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program to provide home care services as an alternative to out of home residential or institutional care, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) advocacy to support disabled General Assistance recipients applying for more appropriate SSI benefits, and Area Agency on Aging programs for seniors.
- Military & Veterans' Affairs Office provides support and assistance to veterans, their survivors, and dependents through outreach, preparation of benefit claims, and transportation to the San Jose and Palo Alto Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare facilities.

Biannual low-income community needs assessment top expressed needs were as follow and without any specific order:

- Shelter
- Rental Assistance
- Mental Health Support
- Food
- Vocational Training
- Financial Management
- Youth Recreation and Engagement
- Child/Youth Education Support
- Leadership Training and Youth Mentoring

MCDSS has several offices in Monterey County to provide convenient access to services for customers in Salinas, Seaside, and King City.

Monterey County Behavioral Health - Staff contacted and consulted with the Monterey County Health Department (Monterey County Behavioral Health - MCBH) which provided the following information.

Currently, Greenfield residents served by MCBH is done so at one of the two MCBH mental health clinics in the cities of Soledad and King City. MCBH conveyed that a partnership with a Farmworker Resource center project will allow opportunities to more effectively reach the Greenfield residents and increase collaboration with vital community partners. MCBH has had a successful partnership with the agency, Center for Community Advocacy (CCA), an agency that works with and within the farmworker communities in Monterey County. This collaboration has enabled MCBH and CCA to work together to identify individuals within the farmworker community needing mental health services.

The needs to facilitate mental health services are:

- Staff time from both CCA and MCBH to ensure collaboration and Mental Health Groups can continue to be provided.
- Available space to run in-person groups once it is safe to do so.

Another service is the Access to Treatment (Access) program which is the entry point for Medi-Cal recipients and the uninsured residents of Monterey County to request and be evaluated for necessitating the provision of mental health services and/or Substance Abuse Disorder (SUD) services. Community members requesting or being referred to MCBH for mental health or SUD services are screened via a triage assessment to determine severity of need, which precipitates either a referral to a community-based mental health agency or further assessment by MCBH, which may lead to the provision of mental health services through MCBH.

The needs from MCBH to facilitate Access to Treatment are:

- Available space for staff to conduct intake appointments, triage assessment, comprehensive mental health/SUD assessments, and individual and/or group treatment.
- Patient service Representative (PSR) to coordinate intake of incoming referrals or requests from community members seeking treatment.
- Psychiatric Social Worker (PSW) staff to conduct the triage assessment and/or the comprehensive mental health assessment.

MCBH prepared a website during COVID response which can be a base for a Farmworker Resource Center of the services to be provided at this Center. Here is a link to the MCBH website: [Farmworker Resources Information for Monterey County | Información de Recursos de Trabajadores Agrícolas para el Condado de Monterey | Monterey County, CA](https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/health/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/farmworker-resource-program-of-the-monterey-county-programa-de-recursos-para-trabajadores-agricolas-del-condado-de-monterey) <<https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/health/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/farmworker-resource-program-of-the-monterey-county-programa-de-recursos-para-trabajadores-agricolas-del-condado-de-monterey>> .

The following are some of the areas that are addressed on the MCBH website:

- Labor Laws
- Workplace Supports

- Access to Healthcare supports
- Childcare
- Housing
- Food and water
- Parenting
- Mental Health
- Unemployment
- Pesticide Exposures
- Immigration
- Education Resources for Farmworkers, including leadership trainings

MCBH proposed the following potential services that a Farmworker Resource Center could provide, virtually, via phone or in-person, and could include the following:

- Medi-Cal Navigator - phone number to call for support
- Childcare Services
- Healthcare group classes - opportunities to sign up for ongoing classes
- Labor rights classes - videos in various languages on how to navigate or use
- Provide information about COVID-19
- Food pantry- videos in various languages on how to navigate or use
- 211 information - videos in various languages on how to navigate or use
- Legal supports
- English classes
- Healthcare services
- Free laundry services (i.e., free washers and dryers) - could the use of these be tied in with classes on resources?
- Free cooked meals (for those who do not have access to a kitchen or fridge)
- Access to a community garden
- A ridesharing or bike program (for those who lack access to transportation)
- Access to a computer lab, copier, and fax machine
- Parenting support classes
- HiSET/GED tutoring
- CHW certification program/classes
- Low or no-cost mental health counseling
- Meditation room and/or yoga/exercise room

Monterey County Behavioral Health and VIDA Project - Staff reached out to MCBH and the VIDA project to seek their input and knowledge of the services that could be provided in the Greenfield community for a Farmworker Resource Center. Staff learned that the VIDA project could coordinate outreach to several organizations to serve as focus groups or to weigh in on the community needs. VIDA and other organizations have developed trust within the Greenfield community as they go out to speak directly to community members or through small community meetings.

Monterey County Public Works, Facilities and Parks - Staff contacted Monterey County Public Works, Facilities and Parks - Real Property Specialist & EOC Logistic Facility Unit Leader to

explore existing County-owned facilities within the City of Greenfield. Two existing facilities were identified:

- Greenfield Library at El Camino Real and
- Public Works Yard on Elm Street

Staff contacted the Greenfield Library staff but found that it would not be the suitable location for a Farmworker Resource Center (with a more permanent use) as the Library's community room needs to be available for other services as needs arise in the community. The Public Works yard, on the other hand, would not be a suitable location as it stores equipment, vehicles and lacks circulation area for additional building/parking based on information obtained from Public Works staff.

Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner - During meetings with the Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner, the success of the program, and acceptance by the agricultural industry was shared. Specifically, growers appreciated that Farmworker Resource Program staff helped to resolve conflicts and misunderstandings between farmworkers and the farm employers, thus avoiding greater problems.

Ventura County Growers - During meetings with Ventura County growers they shared mostly positive comments about the Ventura County Farmworker Program. The cost to Ventura County and ultimately the public was an issue, but the mitigation of conflicts was touted.

Ventura County Human Services Agency - Staff consulted with the Ventura County Farmworker Resources Program staff. Staff learned that the Ventura County Farmworker Resource Program is housed within the Human Service Agency (HSA) and staff support is provided under the HSA's position of Agricultural Community Labor Relations and Resources Coordinator. The Ventura Farmworker Resource Program has a primary location in Oxnard with satellite offices in Santa Paula and Fillmore with evening and weekend hours to help serve the farmworker communities outside of their normal work hours and provides services in three different languages other than Spanish: Mixteco, Zapotec and Triqui. The goals of the Ventura County Farmworker Resource Program, include but are not limited to the following:

- Building trust and relationships with farmworkers
- Protection of farmworkers
- Advising and education on topics such as labor laws, public agencies/services, workplace issues/resolutions
- Enhancing the reputation of Ventura County Agricultural Industry by providing quality farmworker housing and services to farmworkers

The services provided by the Ventura Program are not only County-facilitated but are also in partnership with community-based organizations. It is important to note that the Ventura County Farmworker Resource Program are primarily a referral service. Outreach to the farmworker communities is key in getting information about the services provided by the Program. HSA's staff constantly evaluates the needs of the farmworker communities and are responsible for advancing the goals of the Farmworker Resource Program. The Program staff serve as liaison with farmworkers, employers, and other representatives of the agricultural community and provide guidance on resources available. Facilitates resolutions and review of federal, state and county labor laws, regulations, and policies to assist farmworkers and employers in reaching collaborative solutions related to workplace

conditions. Develops, administers, and evaluates educational and marketing tools for the agricultural worker community.

Staff at Ventura County's Farmworker Resource Program shared that the Board of Supervisors' decision to integrate the Farmworker Program under the Human Services Agency was the result of farmworkers in Ventura County having familiarity with social service offices where they access services such as Medi-Cal, food stamps and are already familiar and comfortable with HSA offices. The Farmworker Resource Program has one main location in the City of Oxnard and two satellite offices in Santa Paula and Fillmore. All three locations are located within HSA buildings. The Oxnard HSA building has a childcare center that serves the needs for farmworker or others, seeking childcare services.

Currently, the Ventura County Farmworker Resource Program-Oxnard Office has approximately seven full-time HSA staff members. The Program has its own office within the Oxnard HSA complex and when conference rooms are needed for classes or meetings, including for farmworkers, they utilize those available in the Human Resources Agency building. The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the Program to focus efforts on helping farmworkers to protect themselves and their families through outreach and distribution of personal protective equipment.

Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indigena Oaxaqueño - Staff met with the Executive Director and Greenfield Program Coordinator for CBDIO to understand the needs of the Greenfield community from their working knowledge and experience of the community. Staff learned that this organization works with all Greenfield residents, in particular, with indigenous families to provide COVID19 information, vaccination shots as well as booster shots. Through their nine staff members, they also hear other needs from indigenous families such as rental assistance, housing needs, food access, childcare needs and assistance, labor rights among other needs. Such information is referred to the appropriate government agencies and/or community-based organizations for further assistance. It is worth mentioning that CBDIO staff speak Triqui, Mixtec and Zapotec, and CBDIO has a physical location in the City of Greenfield as well as available office space to rent.

Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Karen Ross, called a meeting and invited the Agricultural Commissioners of Monterey County and Ventura County to discuss farmworker resource centers and programs. Also, included in this meeting were some of her management staff and staff from the Ventura County Farmworker Resource Program. After a review of the various efforts in Monterey and Ventura Counties, the Secretary encouraged the Agricultural Commissioners to explore conducting outreach to other Agricultural Commissioners in hopes of creating farmworker resource centers and programs in more counties statewide, especially in large agricultural counties.

It was acknowledged during the meeting that the current Agricultural Commissioner for Monterey County served as Agricultural Commissioner for Ventura County before and during the creation of the Ventura County Farmworker Resource Program. It was the then Agricultural Commissioner of Ventura County that identified the need for staff with indigenous language skills to serve that community. The then Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner hired two (2) tri-lingual (English, Spanish, Mixtec) speakers to serve the language needs of the community and department. Of

significant value was the trust the farmworkers had for these staff that not only looked like them, but also spoke the same language. One of those tri-lingual speakers is now staff of the Ventura County Farmworker Resource Program. Training about the culture and many indigenous languages of Mexico was provided to inspection staff in partnership with the California Department of Pesticide Regulation, California Rural Legal Assistance, and the University of California-Los Angeles.

Before the creation of the Ventura County Farmworker Resource Program, a town hall meeting was called by then Ventura County Supervisor Steve Bennett, now Assembly member Bennett (author of AB 941). The meeting was conducted to discuss the service needs of farmworkers in Ventura County. Invited participants included most if not all federal, state, and local government agencies that provided services to farmworkers. Your Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner was in attendance as the Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner. During the meeting, it became clear that with so many agencies responsible for different or the same services that even bureaucratically sophisticated individuals would struggle to navigate the labyrinth. Certainly, most farmworkers would not know what legal authority or service exists, that there is a responsible agency, which agency, and how to contact that agency. The idea of a farmworker resource program was born from this meeting.

#### CONCLUSION:

A Farmworker Resource Center in the community of Greenfield is necessary and feasible utilizing additional county funding, and AB 941 funding. A resource center like the Ventura County Resource Program could provide services and referrals to farmworkers in Greenfield.

Currently, county departments do not have the resources necessary to create a Farmworker Resource Center in the community of Greenfield without additional funding and positions. To date the Agricultural Commissioner's Office has spent and absorbed approximately \$9,285.00 staff cost conducting research, analysis, and putting together this referral report. Additional Agricultural Commissioner's staff time will impact further our ability to meet our legal mandates. Monterey County Departments of Health and Social Services indicated they cannot absorb the work necessary for a Farmworker Resource Center without additional funds.

A brick-and-mortar facility is necessary to allow walking access as transportation is an issue for many. A Farmworker Resource Center need not provide all the necessary services at each location but can provide information, make referrals, provide video communication, and transportation to and from services where specialized providers and/or expensive hi-tech equipment can be accessed. Some services such as childcare would greatly enhance the service by allowing staff to serve farmworkers without distraction. Each additional service would enhance the level of service but is not practical or necessary.

A Farmworker Resource Center must have staff that is knowledgeable of the work and authority of the many agencies that provide services. Such staff must serve as a liaison on behalf of farmworkers.

The most important aspect of a Farmworker Resource Center is trust. Trust can be achieved when the service provider speaks the same language and understands the culture of the farmworker. This aspect is in large part what has made programs in Ventura County and CBDIO successful. That model should be followed.



The following are options to consider:

1. Continue to have the Agricultural Commissioner's Office serve as the primary agency conducting research into the creation of a Farmworker Resource Center in the community of Greenfield, another County department, or a work group consisting of county departments.
2. Explore the need and feasibility of having Farmworker Resource Centers in other communities such as Pajaro, San Ardo, etc.
3. Direct staff to identify a willing community-based organization or County Department to staff and manage a Farmworker Resource Center.

The following are services to consider in the following categories to start a Farmworker Resource Center:

Top unmet needs:

1. Rental Assistance.
2. Food Access.
3. Childcare Services.
4. Labor Rights.
5. Affordable Housing.
6. Medical Access.
7. Unemployment Assistance.
8. Legal Support.
9. Immigration Support.

Other services to consider as a Farmworker Resource Center evolves:

1. Mental Health.
2. Workplace Supports.
3. Utility Assistance.
4. English Classes.
5. Access to a community garden.
6. Parenting support classes.
7. HiSET examination/GED tutoring.
8. Other education resources such as leadership and computer trainings.
9. Access to computers, copies machine and fax machine

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Staff consulted with United Way of Monterey County, the Monterey County Health Department, Virus Integrated Distribution of Aid (VIDA) Project staff, the Monterey County Department of Social Services, the Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indigena Oaxaqueño (CBDIO) - Greenfield Office, Monterey County Public Works, Facilities and Parks, the Ventura County Human Services Agency Farmworker Resource Program-Oxnard Office, the Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, Ventura County growers and the Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture Karen Ross.

FINANCING:

The cost of a Farmworker Resource Center is currently unknown, and it is two-fold. First, the Board

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of Supervisors would need to evaluate options on the type of Farmworker Resource Center. Depending on the direction, the Board of Supervisors should direct staff to determine what existing County services could be transferred to the community of Greenfield and the financial costs this would entail.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

- Economic Development
- Administration
- Health & Human Services
- Infrastructure
- Public Safety

DocuSigned by:

*Henry Gonzales*

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Prepared/Approved by: Henry Gonzales, Agricultural Commissioner, (831) 759-7325

Attachment:

Attachment 1 - Board Referral No. 2021.19 - on file with the Clerk of the Board.