



NC FIELD Vaccine Access Project

National Center for Farmworker Health Demonstration Project
2020-2021



**MIGRANT
HEALTH**

NCFH

National Center for Farmworker Health, Inc.

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Introduction

Background

The National Center for Farmworker Health (NCFH) led a national effort to prevent and mitigate COVID-19 in farmworker communities throughout the country in a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As a part of this project, NCFH funded 19 Demonstration Projects around the U.S. with nearly \$1.3 million to increase COVID-19 vaccine access for farmworkers and their families, including NC FIELD of North Carolina. To achieve their project goals, NC FIELD:

- Partnered to host **4+ monthly COVID-19 vaccine events** in farmworker communities, providing a first dose to 451 farmworkers, a second dose to 487 farmworkers, and at least one dose to over 2,300 family members;
- Facilitated farmworker and family COVID-19 vaccination through **outreach, scheduling, and referral** to vaccine partners;
- Provided **promotoras and language interpretation** for partners' efforts and events
- Conducted outreach to farmworker communities, **reaching 8,500 farmworkers** with education about COVID-19 prevention & vaccination, and social support screening; and
- Provided **community-based and on-site COVID-19 testing** for farmworker outbreaks.

NCFH selected NC FIELD among all projects to participate in a case study because of their wrap-around social support services (such as food distribution and financial support), network of community-based outreach workers/promotoras, and the availability of farmworkers in their region during Fall 2021.

Purpose

The case study activities provide an in-depth look into NC FIELD's project to showcase promising practices, better understand program implementation, and demonstrate impact through storytelling. Evaluation activities included:

- Interviews with farmworkers -
in-person at NC FIELD event Oct., 30, 2021 (n=12) and through WhatsApp (n=1)
- Listening Sessions with NC FIELD outreach staff on Oct., 19, 2021 (n=10)
- End of project interview with NC FIELD program staff
- End of project final report submitted by NC FIELD

Case Study Evaluation Questions



01. What does vaccine hesitancy look like in NC farmworkers & family members?



02. How did NC FIELD coordinate wrap around services?
How did wrap around services (i.e. “social support”) impact farmworker experience with COVID-19?



03. How were partnerships leveraged?



Findings

Vaccine Hesitancy & Acceptance

Trusted local messengers and native languages are critical to delivering information to farmworker communities in a public health emergency.

Nearly half of farmworkers interviewed at the NC FIELD event on Oct. 30 echoed the importance of the church, Ministry of Episcopal, as a credible source of information about COVID-19. Other sources included family & friends, Facebook (including the Ministry Facebook page), TV, radio, phone, news, and community events. Messengers farmworkers trusted the most were the church and health care providers, including doctors, health centers, and pharmacies. Having health educators who speak Spanish was also important to farmworkers. When asked what sources they trust most, one farmworker said, “Events like here where they give information with people like you, that speak Spanish. // En los eventos así como aquí que dan información con las personas como uno, que hablan español.”

TRUSTED MESSENGERS



Health Care Providers



Church



Spanish Speakers

Misinformation and fears of side effects caused feelings of uncertainty among farmworkers about the COVID-19 vaccine.

Farmworkers expressed that it took a lot of thought before being convinced to get vaccinated, particularly because of concerns about the side effects. The side effects, including short term side effects that would make them feel sick temporarily, made farmworkers feel nervous or scared, expressing “they say it causes a big reaction so for that reason it scared me. // como dicen que hace mucha reacción entonces por eso me daba miedo.” Outreach workers also relayed that farmworkers had concerns about interactions with other medications (for diabetes or high blood pressure for example).

Outreach workers expressed that many farmworkers believe the pandemic is man-made or created by the government for several reasons, including to scare people, decrease the population, and as a method of tracking people. Farmworkers heard a lot of myths that “people were saying // decía la gente,” such as, “they were trying it out on us, they wanted to kill us, that the vaccine has metal // estaban haciendo pruebas en nosotros, nos querían matar, que la vacuna traía metal.”

Vaccine Hesitancy & Acceptance conti'd...

Outreach workers faced challenges when addressing concerns of farmworkers. Particularly when misinformation was coming from friends or family, one outreach worker explained, “*who’s he going to believe, his friend or me, a stranger?*” Outreach workers felt they were constantly battling misinformation - there was always a presence of inaccurate information and negativity on social media. One outreach worker elaborated that people see more negative comments than positive on social media because those who have negative experiences are more likely to speak up and share content.

Outreach workers spoke of how the customs and culture around health care in farmworkers’ home countries impacts the routines and habits that they develop around accessing healthcare while in the U.S. Many farmworkers are not in the routine of seeking health care when they do not feel sick, which is often a symptom of inaccessible health care systems (such as inaccessible locations for rural communities, lack of bi-lingual staff or interpreters, and insurance coverage). Speaking about encouraging farmworkers to get vaccinated, one outreach worker said, “*We know people who have not been to the doctor for 20 years and it is very difficult. // Conocemos a gente que no ha ido con el doctor por 20 años y es muy difícil.*” Outreach workers describe how it is difficult to change beliefs and ideals around vaccinations and health care: “*It’s like religion, coming into a culture and imposing a certain kind of religion. And it’s not easy to break that.*” Further, many farmworkers prefer traditional medicine and healing practices common among Indigenous populations such as teas and natural remedies.



“[I got vaccinated] because it’s necessary so that we can get past this illness. So that we take care of each other. // [Me vacuné] porque es necesario para que pueda pasar esta enfermedad. Para que nos cuide a nosotros” -Farmworker

Vaccine Hesitancy & Acceptance conti'd...

After much thought and education shared by NC FIELD outreach workers, nearly 2,800 farmworkers and their family members decided to get vaccinated through an NC FIELD event.

Farmworkers and their families were motivated by many different reasons, but both outreach workers and farmworkers expressed that family was a main reason for getting vaccinated. Some wanted to be able to visit family, while others wanted to protect their young children who were not yet able to be vaccinated. Outreach workers used family as a strategy to address concerns about getting vaccinated, by making their messages personable. One NC FIELD staff described, “[I] point out to farmworkers that I took the vaccine myself and got my daughters to take it with me. I wouldn’t put my daughters in any danger.” Ultimately, NC FIELD staff spent many months investing time in events and outreach to gain the trust of farmworkers and their families. At this point, farmworkers felt comfortable with the staff and trusted the health education that outreach workers were providing.



2,800 FARMWORKERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS VACCINATED THROUGH NC FIELD EVENTS

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES USED BY OUTREACH WORKERS

- 1** Make their messages personable by sharing stories about getting themselves and their own families vaccinated
- 2** Use family as a motivator to help encourage farmworkers to get vaccinated
- 3** Invest time in events and 1-1 interactions to build trust

Most farmworkers surveyed did not experience any challenges in getting the vaccine, however when they did, it was often related to transportation –

including needing to carpool or to travel long distances. One farmworker explained many barriers to getting the vaccine, after an hour drive, the mother was faced with a confusing and frustrating healthcare experience. She explains,

"They told me if I get vaccinated that they wouldn't ask anything from me, but they asked for my social security, and I didn't have it. I had my daughter with me, I didn't understand what they were saying to me in English. My daughter said to me, 'they're asking for your social security. If they are asking for it, don't get vaccinated because you heard in the ministry - they were saying that those getting vaccinated should not be asked for anything, even social security.' And my daughter said, 'you know, they're asking for your social security number so don't get vaccinated and let's go!'"

Me dijeron si me vacunaba que no me iban a preguntar nada pero me preguntaron por el seguro social y no tenía. Entonces, llevaba a mi niña, no entendí lo que me estaban diciendo porque me hablaban en inglés. Entonces me dice mi niña 'te están pidiendo el seguro, si te están pidiendo seguro no te vacunes porque oíste ahí en el ministerio estaban diciendo que el que se vacunaban no le tenían que pedir ni seguro ni nada.' Y mi niña dice 'sabes, te están pidiendo el número de seguro social entonces no te vacunes y nos vamos.'" - Farmworker



FROM MISINFORMATION TO VACCINATION

Misinformation and myths spread about Covid-19

- Through Facebook, news, friends, family, and/or word of mouth

- Concerns about the vaccine short term side effects
- Concerns about interactions with other medications
- Myths: "they were trying the vaccine out on us, they wanted to kill us, the vaccine has metal, or the vaccine has a chip"

Farmworkers felt nervous, scared, or uncertain about getting the vaccine

NC FIELD addressed concerns through outreach and education






- Making their messages personable by sharing stories about getting themselves and their own families vaccinated
- Use family as a motivator to help convince farmworkers to get vaccinated
- Invest time in events and 1-1 interactions to build trust

- Trust in information shared through the Church and Spanish speakers
- Convenience of NC FIELD community events

2,800 farmworkers decided to get vaccinated at a NC FIELD event

Wrap Around Services

NC FIELD provided many services outside of vaccine clinics and education, such as

 COVID testing after hours	 Transportation
 Interpretation	 Financial assistance - used for clothes, food
 Food, pantries, food boxes	 Blood pressure checks

Most farmworkers were satisfied with the convenience of the NC FIELD event, and the accommodations for farmworkers (such as after-hour events). Several suggestions from farmworkers to make getting services from NC FIELD easier included:

- 1** continuing weekend and afternoon events
- 2** providing information on social media
- 3** contact farmworkers by phone

Partnerships

NC FIELD is embedded within the community in a reciprocal relationship in order to coordinate services.

NC FIELD staff are from the community themselves, and all team members have their own connections and resources that they utilize for their job. In turn, many community members know NC FIELD staff by name. Many community organizations also contribute and support NC FIELD through donations (such as food, clothing, and money) and sharing space for outreach, meetings, and vaccination events.

One important partnership was with Walmart, who hosted many NC FIELD events. These events helped NC FIELD reach farmworkers in areas where they had struggled before, as farmworkers frequent Walmart. At the start of the project, NC FIELD began working closely with a small catholic church with a large congregation of farmworkers, as it was located in the middle of 36 labor camps. Many events are hosted at the church, such as COVID-19 testing, services, and handing out masks, and the leader of the church joined NC FIELD's board of directors. Further, NC FIELD plans to start leasing a building on site to run a food pantry. NC FIELD plans to sustain these partnerships to continue reaching farmworkers as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, as well as provide other services beyond the impact of the pandemic.

Looking Ahead

There was a general uplifting and supportive sentiment from both farmworkers and NC FIELD staff. The community supports one another in many ways and believe that they are there for one another. NC FIELD will continue their efforts to vaccinate farmworkers against COVID-19 following CDC recommendations such as booster shots for adults, and vaccinations for children.

"I believe that we all help one another whenever it's possible // Creo que pues todos nos ayudamos uno a otro cuando uno puede." -Farmworker

"What I can say is that all of this about the vaccines is very good to avoid the sickness, the contagiousness. This is what I can say for the people who don't want to get vaccinated, it's bad because we have to get vaccinated because it's for the good of all, not just for the individual. It's for everyone, so we don't spread it to more people. It's obligatory, well, not obligatory but we take it like it is because it's for the good of everyone. // Lo que puedo decir es que eso de las vacunas está muy bien para poder evitar la enfermedad, el contagio. Eso es lo que puedo decir para la gente que no quiere vacunarse, está mal porque hay que vacunarse porque es un bien para todos, no más para uno, es para todos, para no contagiar a más gente, es obligatorio, bueno no es obligatorio pero lo tomamos como si fuera porque es para un bien de uno" -Farmworker



Appendix

Appendix 1: Farmworker Interview guide

1. Where do you get your information about COVID-19? What sources do you trust?
2. Why did you decide to get the COVID-19 vaccine?
3. Were you unsure about getting the COVID-19 vaccine? If so, why?
4. What was challenging about getting vaccinated?
5. If you have received services from NC FIELD, how have they helped you?
6. What would make getting services from NC FIELD easier?

Appendix 2: NC FIELD Outreach Staff Group Interview Guide

Vaccine hesitancy

- How often did you hear that FWs were unsure about getting the COVID-19 vaccine?
- What are some reasons you heard why farmworkers and/or family members of farmworkers were unsure about getting the COVID-19 vaccine?
- What are some common myths you heard about getting the COVID-19 vaccine?
- How would you address any myths/misinformation that you heard?

Wrap around services

- Our understanding is that NC FIELD offers a variety of wrap around services for farmworkers. Can you tell us a little more about those generally?
- What services did you offer to address COVID-19?
- What social support did you provide for farmworkers? (ex: transportation to appointments, providing housing or food during quarantine/isolation, etc)
- How did NC FIELD coordinate those services for farmworkers?
- How did NC FIELD integrate their COVID-19 outreach with these other services?
- In what ways did those services impact farmworkers' experience with covid?

Partnerships

- Did you have any partnerships or collaborations with other organizations that helped you to achieve your goals/activities?
- Were these new or established partnerships?
- If new, how did the partnership start?
- If established, how did the partnership change in response to COVID-19?
- In what ways were these partnerships helpful?
- What is needed to keep these partnerships going?