Evaluation of the National Farmworker Jobs Program

Final Report

March 7, 2013

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Policy Research

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ACRONYMS

AFOP	Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs
AJCs	American Job Centers
CETA	Comprehensive Employment and Training Act
CNA	Certified nursing assistant
DOL	U.S. Department of Labor
EER	Entered-employment rate
ERR	Employment-retention rate
ESL	English as a second language
ETA	Employment and Training Administration
FPO	Federal project officer
HEP	High School Equivalency Program
IEP	Individual employment plan
JTPA	Job Training Partnership Act
MIS	Management information system
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
MSFWs	Migrant and seasonal farmworkers
NFJP	National Farmworker Jobs Program
OJT	On-the-job training
PY	Program year
RA	Related assistance
TA	Technical assistance
UI	Unemployment Insurance
WEP	Work-experience program

WIA	Workforce Investment Act of 1998
WIASPR	Workforce Investment Act Standardized Participant Record
WIB	Workforce Investment Board

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP), funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL's) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and authorized under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), provided grants to 52 public, private, and nonprofit grantees in 49 states and Puerto Rico in program year 2011. That year, ETA spent $78 million on the NFJP, which served 19,700 participants (U.S. Department of Labor 2012[a], 2012[b]). ETA contracted with Mathematica Policy Research to provide insight into how the NFJP operates, whom it serves, and how farmworkers fare after participation. In this report, we present the findings of our evaluation.

NFJP Structure

NFJP grantees serve migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their dependents. Eligible participants must be disadvantaged and be citizens of the United States or be allowed to work in the U.S. on a nontemporary basis.[1] Federal regulations stipulate that NFJP grantees provide a range of services—including case management, skills training, and related assistance—to aid farmworkers in meeting their employment goals and achieving economic self-sufficiency. While the program seeks to provide new skills to farmworkers who wish to leave agriculture for higher paying, more stable occupations, it also provides access to skills upgrades that allow farmworkers who choose to stay in agriculture to do so with higher wages and more stable employment.

Grantees choose what services to provide and whether they are provided in-house or through formal or informal partnering agreements. They can provide access to the following types of services: workforce investment activities, including core services such as basic skills assessment and self-directed job search assistance; intensive services such as case management, career development, and basic education; training including occupational skills and job training and on-the-job training (OJT); and related assistance services, which are direct assistance payments to cover immediate needs such as transportation.

To monitor grantee performance and learn about participant experiences, ETA requires NFJP grantees to collect a standard set of information about program participants in the Workforce Investment Act Standardized Participant Record (WIASPR). These data are used to calculate what are referred to as common measures, which are tied to individual goals for NFJP and other employment programs. These three measures are the following: the entered-employment rate (EER), the employment-retention rate (ERR), and average earnings.

[1] Disadvantaged means they have incomes below the poverty line or 70 percent of the lower living standard income level (whichever is higher) for any 2 consecutive months out of the 24 months before applying for the program.

Study Approach

We designed the evaluation to learn the breadth of grantee practices and how to improve program policies and services, focusing on six key research topics: (1) area context; (2) program services; (3) partnerships and American Job Centers (AJCs)[2]; (4) performance measures and outcomes; (5) recordkeeping of services; (6) technical assistance (TA).

We selected nine sites for in-depth case studies based on several key criteria: operating structure (meaning whether they are a single-state grantee or they operate in one state as part of a larger umbrella organization serving multiple states); whether they are a home-base state for migrant workers or in a migrant stream;[3] and the number of participants served. Case studies included in-depth interviews with headquarter and state-level staff, front-line staff and partners, and AJC staff during two to three day site visits, which took place between March and November 2011.

We also used WIASPR data from program years 2008 and 2009 to look at national service profiles and to conducted descriptive analyses on the employment outcomes of NFJP participants. These data include a small number of demographic characteristics, variables on general service receipt, and data on the common measures.

Context and Population

Grantees cover many geographic regions facing different labor-market conditions and political environments. Their physical location and service area affect their program offerings in the following main ways:

- Geographic diversity determines whether grantees serve urban or rural areas, the likelihood of severe weather events that threaten crops and farmworkers alike, and the types of farming practices and farm characteristics. Grantees serving rural areas may need to allocate more resources to gas vouchers or transportation services to the rural areas than to grantees in urban areas.
- Local labor-market conditions, such as the loss of local industries and high unemployment rates, contribute to the challenge of placing NFJP participants in sustainable jobs. Grantees countered labor-market challenges by connecting participants to training opportunities in specific in-demand occupations, such as truck driving and certified nursing assistance.
- National and local immigration politics and policies affect NFJP participants and staff. Federal and state policies influence how much time NFJP staff spend reaching

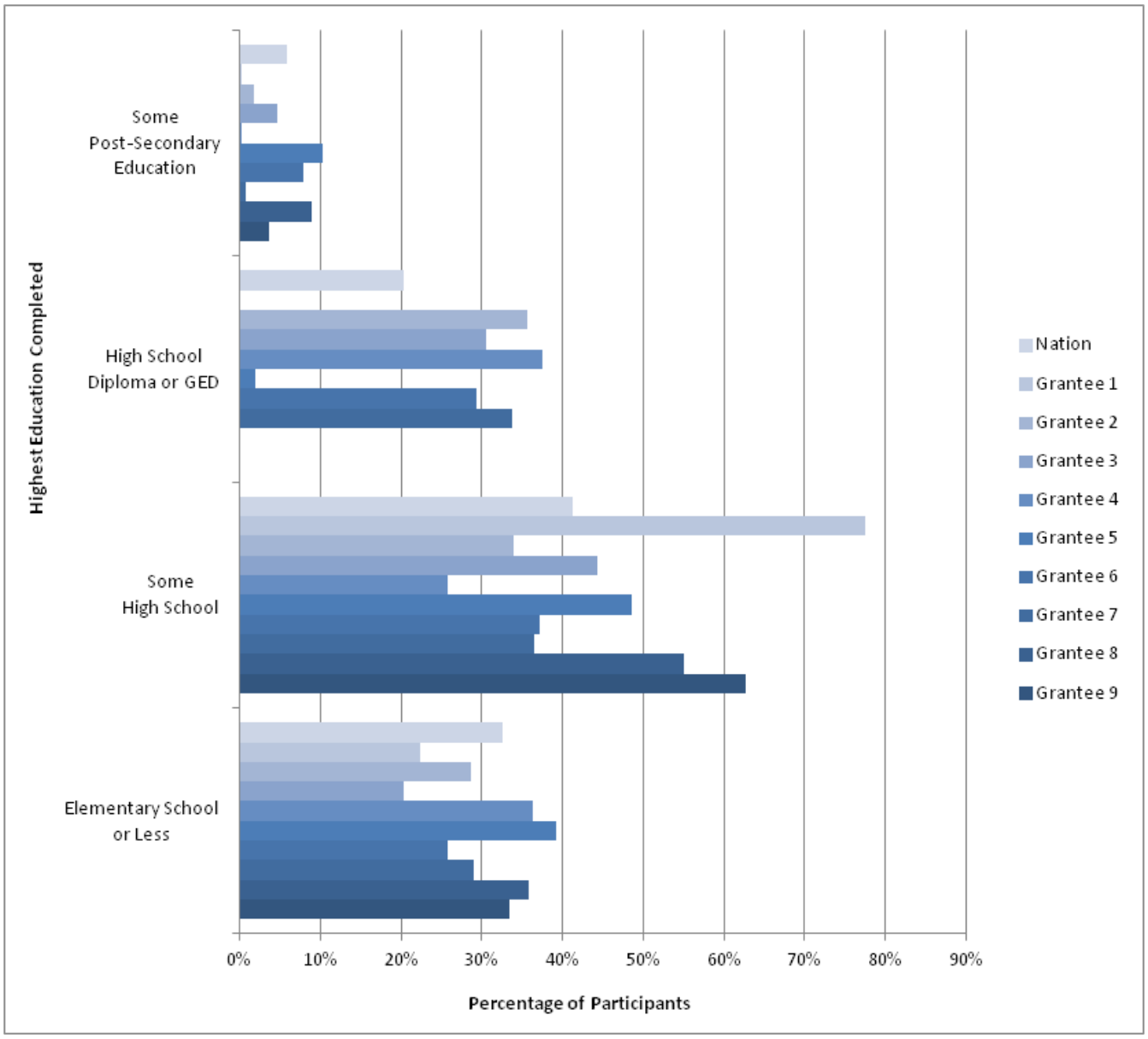
[2] American Job Centers were formerly known as One-Stop Career Centers.

[3] There are three primary agricultural streams for migrant farmworkers in the U.S. Each begins in a "home state" that migrant farmworkers consider their home and return to at the end of the season. Each stream flows from one of the home states. We chose a combination of both home states and at least one grantee from each of the three migrant streams.

out to potential participants and collecting necessary documentation. These policies also affect as the likelihood that participants will willingly engage in the program.

Participant demographics, such as education level and barriers to employment, influence the service offering of grantees. Despite serving participants with higher levels of education than NFJP participants nationwide (Figure ES.1), every grantee we visited reported that participants' main employment barrier was educational or skill deficiencies. Seven of the nine grantees also reported English-language barriers to employment.

Figure ES.1. Education Level of Participants, by Grantee



Source: PY 2009 WIASPR data.

Characteristics of the grantees studied—organizational roots, overall size, and staff characteristics and job specialization—influence how they provide services. Services vary

depending on whether grantees are primarily service providers or also act as education and training providers. The former tends to provide more supportive services and referrals to partners for education and training, while the latter focuses on providing training and educational programming directly. NFJP grantees also try to match the characteristics and responsibilities of their staff to participant needs. For example, many staff members are Spanish speakers and/or former farmworkers.

Grantees partnering with AJCs is a required feature of the program, but how those partnerships actually work varies considerably and can also affect which services are provided and by whom. Although only two grantees studied were co-located with AJCs, NFJP programs tend to be the first point of entry for farmworkers to WIA services. Six of the grantees studied encourage participants to use AJC resource rooms, and five grantees and AJCs reported that AJCs refer individuals to NFJP grantees. Partnerships allow grantees to leverage funding by sending participants to receive available services from other agencies, while spending NFJP funds to provide services that are not already available in the community.

Program Services

Each NFJP program provides a mix of employment and training services and related assistance. Grantees conduct outreach and recruitment, assessment, enrollment and service planning, service provision, and a host of job search and follow-up activities.

Grantees in the study boosted enrollment by using multiple outreach efforts. They combined word of mouth, farm-based recruitment strategies, and marketing efforts. Three grantees used enrollment performance goals to motivate staff.

Before enrolling participants, grantees conduct intake and determine eligibility, assess participant skills and abilities, orient participants to the program, and plan service strategies tailored to each individual. The timing and order of these processes vary to meet the needs of each program. Eligibility verification is a multi-step process requiring extensive documentation collection, two documentation reviews, and a final determination. Grantees found that potential participants were often missing required documentation and developed unique ways to obtain those documents when needed. One grantee helped potential participants register with Selective Service, and others helped individuals navigate the complicated and expensive process of documenting citizenship.

Every NFJP participant has access to, at a minimum, core and intensive services. Grantees in the study largely use their in-house staff to provide core services, such as assessment, resume writing, and interviewing, over the course of participants' enrollment in the program. Grantees reported using this strategy because their staff members are best suited to meet the particular needs of farmworkers. Intensive services, such as remedial education, adult basic education, GED training, and English as a second language (ESL) classes, are more frequently provided by community partners because grantees lack the staff resources or specialization to provide such services.

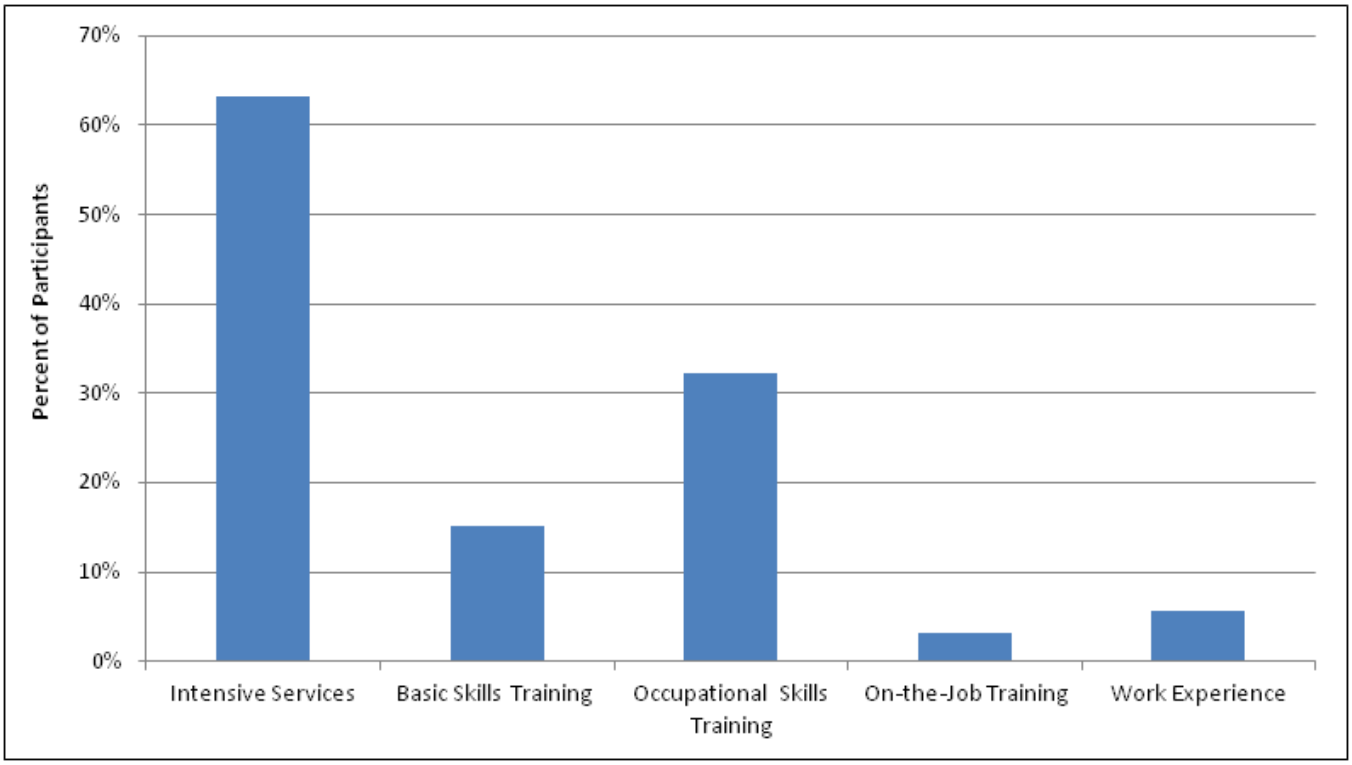
All grantees offer access to a variety of training programs, including occupational skills and job training, OJT, and work experience. Nationwide, 63 percent of NFJP participants received some type of intensive service (Figure ES.2). These services can include specialized assessments

of skill levels, diagnostic testing, or case management. About 15 percent of participants received basic skills training, including remedial reading, writing, communication, mathematics and/or English for non-English speakers. About a third of participants received occupational skills training.

Truck driving and certified nursing assistant are the most common vocational and occupational skills training programs offered by the nine selected grantees. All but one grantee use partners such as community colleges, community-based organizations, or vocational programs to provide these programs. Several factors—such as program length, cost, providers' success records and participant assessments and interests—shape how grantees select training programs for individual participants.

Grantees studied provide multiple components of job-readiness training throughout the duration of their programs. Four grantees provide job-readiness trainings or workshops, varying in duration from hour-long, single sessions to 40-hour curriculum-based trainings. At least two provide some of these components in conjunction with AJCs. All but one grantee reported providing soft skills training, either to small groups or in one-on-one settings.

Figure ES.2. Percentage of Participants Receiving Services in PY 2009



Source: PY 2009 WIASPR data.

In an effort to place participants in stable employment, grantees also provide several kinds of job-search support (Table ES.1). Seven of the nine grantees provided job-search support to help participants find stable employment, with three dedicating staff to job development and placement. Six grantees developed strategies to engage employers, though only two reported establishing monthly employer engagement goals (ranging from two to five per month).

Table ES.1. Components of Job-Search Support Provided, by Grantee

Job-Search Support	Grantee 1	Grantee 2[a]	Grantee 3	Grantee 4	Grantee 5	Grantee 6	Grantee 7	Grantee 8[a]	Grantee 9
Help finding jobs	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	
Employer engagement	√		√	√	√	√	√		
Setup/tailoring of job interviews and provisions of referrals	√			√			√		
Connections to opportunities (employers, networking events, and so on)					√				
Pre-screening of participants for jobs	√								

[a]We do not have complete information on these grantees' job-readiness training activities.

Source: Interviews conducted with administrators and staff during site visits to grantee locations from March to November 2011. At least one respondent at the grantee reported this information.

Grantees rely on two mechanisms to ensure that participants receive needed supports: related assistance and referrals. All grantees offer financial support in the form of vouchers to support economic stability among farmworkers. Vouchers can assist with utilities, clothing, food, gas, and other transportation services. Referrals to community and social service agencies enable grantees to conserve program funding by allowing them to rely on other agencies to provide necessary services.

Additionally, eight grantees provide stipends to help support farmworkers during their training programs. Stipend amounts range from $2.50 per hour to $5.85 per hour at one grantee but top out at $10 per day at another.

Performance Measures, Tracking, and Technical Assistance

ETA collects data from grantees on NFJP participant performance outcomes in entered employment and employment retention. Nationwide statistics from 2009 show that 82.9 percent of participants entered employment in the first quarter after exit from NFJP. This exceeded ETA's performance goal of 77.2 percent. Of those participants who became employed in quarter one after exit, grantees reported that 75.2 percent retained employment for the second and third quarters after exit in 2009, surpassing the ETA goal of 69.7 percent.

Although grantees in the study met the performance goals, they reported several challenges to tracking participant progress. The primary challenges to meeting performance goals were high participant drop-off, the effect of participant mobility on grantees' tracking efforts, and the need for collection of employment and wage data from inaccessible and often unreliable sources.

Grantees collectively reported five main strategies for meeting the common measures:

1. Set staff goals to encourage high enrollment and job-placement rates by creating incentives to meeting enrollment and placement goals.

2. Strive to reduce participant dropouts and help struggling participants by finding them part-time jobs and helping ensure participants arrive to jobs and training on time.
3. Create enrollment policies that target populations grantees believe are likely to succeed. These policies range from a wait-and-see approach to allowing grace periods to try out training programs and targeting specific populations of farmworkers.
4. Develop follow-up techniques to obtain wage and employment information, such as making more frequent contact attempts.
5. Categorize certain participants as receiving related-assistance only to exclude them from performance measure calculations.[4]

The sophistication of grantees' recordkeeping practices and the management information systems ranged dramatically. These systems ranged from simple paper and pencil with weekly data entry to field laptops linking directly to state-of-the-art case-management systems. Grantees most commonly reported using data-driven reports to monitor their offices' goals or the states' goals.

Grantees can seek TA from a number of sources to continue program improvements. All grantees reported receiving TA from the Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs at some time, although the nature of that assistance varied, and three reported receiving TA from their federal project officers. Two-thirds of grantees reported the need for additional TA. This included clarification of program rules, assistance with data reporting, partnership development, and guidance on service provision.

Employment Outcomes by Farmworker Characteristics

Using WIASPR data to explore the relationships between farmworker characteristics, service receipt, and employment outcomes on a national level, we found the following:

- Participants in their 20s and 30s are more likely to enter employment than participants older than 40 and younger than 21, but are not necessarily more likely to retain employment.
- Dependents of farmworkers do not have better employment outcomes than farmworkers.
- Educational achievement and employment outcomes vary by highest grade completed, but the relationships are not linear.
- Most barriers to employment are associated with lower EERs and ERRs. Participants with the following characteristics have lower employment outcomes than those without such barriers: limited English proficient, offender, homeless, lack transportation, single parent, or basic skills deficient.

[4] Only one grantee reported this practice, and staff worked with ETA beforehand to ensure adherence to the spirit of the program. This grantee counts participants who receive only GED and/or ESL classes as receiving related assistance only, meaning they do not have to collect outcome data for these participants.

- Participants who receive both intensive and training services have higher employment outcomes than participants who receive no training or intensive services, or those who receive intensive services only.

Implications of Key Findings

Although many of the challenges facing NFJP grantees are endemic to all job training and job-search support programs, they are compounded by other issues that are specific to serving farmworkers. Eligible farmworkers can be difficult to locate because of family members' work-authorization status; some are reluctant to get involved with any government-sponsored services. Documenting farmworker eligibility can take several months if they need to register for Selective Service or replace lost citizenship documentation. In addition, farmworkers have nontrivial barriers to employment, including a lack of work experience outside of farm work, limited educational achievement, and lack of adequate language skills needed to perform well in most workplaces.

Grantees shared their strategies for serving the farmworker population during on-site interviews. They included seeking out partnerships that complement in-house services to fully address the needs of farmworkers, stretching NFJP resources by leveraging other funding sources to provide services, co-locating with partners to increase farmworkers' access to a range of services, making training programs financially plausible for farmworkers, and using training programs that meet multiple needs at once.

Additionally, interviews with program administrators and frontline staff identified four specific areas of development that might help grantees better serve farmworkers through NFJP:

1. Grantees reported the need for assistance in creating specialized education and training programs.
2. To improve their performance reporting, many grantees need TA on job-development and placement activities as well as strategies to collect and verify employment.
3. Farmworkers could benefit from improved partnerships between grantees and AJCs.
4. Improvements in data collection and recordkeeping systems could enhance grantees' ability to track service receipt and outcomes.

It was beyond the scope of this evaluation to identify the actual effect of the program on farmworkers' economic success. However, the service strategies described in this report, along with the suggestions for further program development, can help policymakers and practitioners better target their resources in helping farmworkers achieve the goal of economic stability.

I. INTRODUCTION

Of the approximately three million people working in the U.S. agricultural industry, about one million are hired workers rather than farm owners or their families (Kandal 2008). Farmworkers in the U.S. are overwhelmingly male, Hispanic, and on average younger and less educated than other U.S. workers. Full-time farmworkers also earn less money and have higher poverty rates. In fact, unemployment rates for these workers are twice as high as those of other workers and are even higher among crop workers than livestock workers (Kandal 2008). Beyond this, farmworkers have physically demanding jobs, often in dangerous and poorly regulated conditions.

The National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP), funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL's) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and authorized under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), serves migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs) through grants to public, private, and nonprofit agencies that serve farmworkers. In 2011, ETA spent $78 million on the NFJP, which served 19,700 participants (U.S. Department of Labor 2012[a], 2012[b]).[5]

Funded by the ETA, this evaluation provides insight into how the NFJP operates, whom it serves, and how farmworkers fare after participation. Specifically, in this report, we describe the environment in which a select subset of grantees provides services, and how they tailor programming to meet farmworker and contextual needs. We also explore how these grantees define and measure their own success, and identify grantees' most effective strategies for moving farmworkers into employment and helping them achieve economic stability. In addition, we describe results of analysis using national data to test the relationships between farmworker characteristics and their employment outcomes. Finally, we discuss strategies that grantees report as successful for serving this population and the implications of implementing these strategies in other areas.

We begin this chapter with a brief history of the NFJP. We then discuss how the program is structured, including how funds can be used and what services can be provided. We describe the study design, from research questions to study methods, and finish with a roadmap for the remainder of the report.

A. History of the NFJP

For decades, federal programs have sought to improve the lives of farmworkers, either by supporting them while they stayed in farm work—through financial support or skills upgrades—or by helping them find nonagricultural employment opportunities. The Economic Opportunity Act had the first job-training program for migrant and seasonal farmworkers. As part of the War on Poverty, the purpose of this program was to help farmworkers prepare for upgraded jobs and alternatives to farm work. The 1970s then saw two programs developed to improve the lives of

[5] NFJP has two distinct parts: an employment and training component and a housing program. This amount is for the employment and training component only.

farmworkers: The Comprehensive Migrant Manpower Program of 1971 and the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) of 1973. Both sought to give farmworkers alternative employment in nonfarming industries or to improve their lives and skills if they remained in farm work. In the early 1980s, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), administered by DOL, funded 53 grants with a similar goal of helping farmworkers find nonagricultural employment or to support them in retaining upgraded agricultural employment. Under this program, about 60 to 75 percent of participants received supportive and emergency assistance (known as related assistance or RA). The transition from JTPA to WIA in 1998 caused a shift in priorities for the farmworkers program, including a tightening of eligibility criteria and a shift in emphasis from supportive services to intensive and training services. Currently, only about 30 percent of NFJP participants receive RA. WIA also increased the number of performance measures that grantees were responsible for reporting, holding them accountable for tracking the outcomes of clients once they leave the program.

B. Structure of the NFJP

Federal regulations stipulate that NFJP grantees provide a range of services—including case management, skills training, and related assistance—to aid farmworkers in meeting their employment goals and achieving economic self-sufficiency. While the program seeks to provide new skills to farmworkers who wish to leave agriculture for higher paying, more stable occupations, it also provides access to skills upgrades that allow farmworkers who choose to stay in agriculture to do so with higher wages and more stable employment. To accomplish this goal, grantees have considerable flexibility as to how and when they provide services to farmworkers. Services can be provided directly through grantees or connections with other community resources, including training and employment services through the American Job Centers (AJCs).[6]

Grantees. Grantees are community-based and public agencies that serve farmworker populations. They may serve an entire state, multiple states, or just one region in a state. Congressionally appropriated funds are divided among grantees based on formulas calculating relative need and the number of eligible farmworkers in their service area. In program year (PY) 2011, DOL allocated $78,253,180 to the NFJP training program among 52 grantees in 49 states and Puerto Rico, ranging from a low of $38,696 (Rhode Island) to a high of $8,208,464 (California) (U.S. Department of Labor n.d.[a]). Funding fluctuated in the past three years, with slightly more allocated in PY 2010 than 2009 or 2011 (U.S. Department of Labor 2010, 2009). The number of participants served through the program was highest in 2009, topping out slightly above 21,000 (U.S. Department of Labor 2012[c]).

Program eligibility. The NFJP serves eligible farmworkers and their dependents. To be eligible, individuals must:

[6] American Job Centers were formerly known as One-Stop Career Centers.

- Be disadvantaged, with income below the poverty line or 70 percent of the lower living standard income level (whichever is higher), for any 12 consecutive months out of the 24 months before applying for the program (U.S. Department of Labor 2005).[7]
- Be migrant or seasonal farmworkers.
  - Migrant farmworkers travel to job sites and cannot return to a permanent place of residence the same day.
  - Seasonal farmworkers work primarily in agricultural labor characterized by chronic unemployment and underemployment. They depend primarily on agricultural labor for support during a 12-month eligibility determination period, wherein he or she worked at least 25 days in farm work or earned at least $800 in farm work, and earned at least 50 percent of his or her total income from farm work or was employed at least 50 percent of his or her total employment time in farm work (U.S. Department of Labor 2005).
- Be U.S. citizens, legal permanent residents, or other immigrants authorized to work in the United States (U.S. Department of Labor 2005).
- Be claimed on the farmworkers' federal income taxes (or otherwise demonstrate a relationship to the farmworker) if they are dependents of farmworkers—including spouses and children (U.S. Department of Labor 2005).[8]

Services. Grantees have the flexibility to choose what services to provide and whether they are provided in-house or through formal or informal partnering agreements. Based on DOL guidance (20 CFR 669), they can provide access to the following types of services:

- Workforce investment activities, including core services such as basic skills assessment and self-directed job search assistance
- Intensive services such as case management, career development and basic education
- Training including occupational skills and job training and on-the-job training (OJT)
- Related assistance services, which are direct assistance payments to cover immediate needs such as transportation.

Common measures. In PY 2005, ETA changed the performance measures for most employment programs. Rather than have similar measures that are calculated differently for each program, ETA implemented the "common measures" and set individual goals for each employment program. These measures are:

[7] Household income is adjusted for family size.

[8] A dependent can be a spouse or any individual claimed as a dependent on the farmworkers' federal income taxes in the previous year, including children and grandchildren, who have received over half of their total support from the farmworker during the eligibility determination period.

- **Entered-employment rate (EER)**—the percentage of exiters (people who have left the program) who were unemployed when they entered the program and employed in the first quarter after the quarter in which the individual exited the program (exit quarter).
- **Employment-retention rate (ERR)—**the percentage of exiters who were employed in the first quarter after the exit quarter and employed in the second and third quarters after the exit quarter.
- **Average earnings**—the average wages in the second and third quarters after the exit date for all exiters who were employed, as determined by grantees' supplemental data, in the first, second, and third quarters after the exit date.

Table I.1 shows NFJP performance goals for PY 2008 through 2011.

Table I.1. NFJP Performance Goals Established by ETA, by Program Year

Common Measure	PY 2008	PY 2009	PY 2010	PY 2011
EER	78.0%	77.2%	77.6%	79.7%
ERR	74.0%	69.7%	69.9%	70.1%
Average earnings	$9,531	$8,843	$8,911	$8,654

Sources: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration n.d.[b], 2011[a].

C. Study Design

This evaluation focuses on six key research topics, chosen in consultation with DOL, to learn the breadth of grantee practices and how to improve program policies and services. Each topic includes challenges grantees encountered and the strategies used to address them:

1. **Area context.** How do the local areas in which NFJP offices operate and the MSFW populations they serve differ? What contextual factors contribute to variation in grantees' performance?
2. **Program services.** How do grantees' reach out, recruit, and determine program eligibility for clients? What are the most common methods of entry and exit into the program for clients who receive services? What sequence of services do clients typically receive? In what programs are clients typically co-enrolled? What key challenges do grantees face in retaining clients? How do contextual factors affect the types of services provided?
3. **Partnerships and AJCs.** How do grantees and AJCs typically partner? What factors affect grantees' partnership with the AJC? If a model relationship exists, what are the basic factors that contribute to the success of that relationship?
4. **Performance measures and outcomes.** How are performance measures tracked? What performance measures and outcomes do grantees think best reflect their performance? How do grantees use the performance measures to plan and improve their services? What, if any, obstacles do grantees report as deterring from their successful performance, as defined by the common measures?

5. **Recordkeeping of services.** What process do grantees follow to record their service delivery and performance measures? How do grantees' data systems vary? What reports can grantees run from their data systems? What specific aspects of grantees' recordkeeping systems may contribute to variation in data collection or variation in performance reporting by grantees?
6. **Technical assistance (TA).** What TA do grantees currently receive? From whom? What TA needs of grantees are not being met?

We used both qualitative case studies and quantitative analysis of administrative data to address the research questions.

Case studies of selected NFJP grantees. In collaboration with DOL, the evaluation team selected nine grantees for in-depth case studies. They are not representative of all grantees nationwide but vary based on several key criteria, including the following:

- Operating structure, meaning whether they are a single-state grantee or they operate in one state as part of a larger umbrella organization serving multiple states
- Whether they are a home-base state for migrant workers or in a migrant stream[9]
- The number of participants served (Table I.2)

Table I.2. Characteristics of Selected Grantees

Grantee	Grantee Structure	Number of Participants Served[a]
Grantee 1	Single-state	Large
Grantee 2	Multi-state	Small
Grantee 3	Single-state	Large
Grantee 4	Single-state	Large
Grantee 5	Multi-state	Small
Grantee 6	Single-state	Small
Grantee 7	Single-state	Large
Grantee 8	Single-state	Medium
Grantee 9	Multi-state	Large

Source: PY 2007 WIASPR data.

[a]Based on number of participants in PY 2007; small is fewer than 200 participants, and large is over 500 participants.

[9] There are three primary agricultural streams for migrant farmworkers in the U.S. Each begins in a "home state" that migrant farmworkers consider their home and return to at the end of the season. Each stream flows from one of the home states. We chose a combination of both home states and at least one grantee from each of the three migrant streams.

We conducted one-person site visits between March and November 2011. Site-visit length varied by local office accessibility and staff availability but was generally two to three days. We collected data from multiple perspectives, interviewing headquarter staff and state-level staff, front-line staff and partners, and AJC staff. Site visitors developed detailed documentation of their on-site experiences and interviews. We then analyzed these documents using the qualitative analytic software, Atlas.ti. Employing 73 unique codes, we grouped data into 13 larger code families, mapping back to the topic areas, for analysis. These groupings then facilitated the identification of patterns and themes across grantees as well as unique practices within grantees.

Administrative data analysis of all NFJP grantees. The study uses Workforce Investment Act Standardized Participant Record (WIASPR) data to examine hypotheses about the employment outcomes of NFJP participants. These data include a small number of demographic characteristics, variables on general service receipt, and data on the common measures discussed earlier.

D. Roadmap to the Report

The remainder of this report is divided into five chapters. In Chapter II, we describe the context in which the nine selected grantees operate, including the geographic landscape, the labor markets in each area, and the political climate that grantees and farmworkers face in each locality. This chapter details the diversity of farmworkers and grantee organizations themselves, and how community resources influence partnership activities and the actual services that grantees provide. In Chapter III, we give a detailed account of the diverse services each of the nine grantees provides, and how they are provided, from outreach to training to job placement and follow-up. In Chapter IV, we discuss the grantees experiences reporting for ETA performance measurement, the sophistication of their recordkeeping services, and unmet TA needs. In Chapter V, we present findings from a descriptive analysis examining relationships between farmworker characteristics and employment outcomes on a national level. Finally, in Chapter VI, we discuss the strategies that grantees perceived as most useful and the implications for meeting the goals of helping farmworkers achieve self-sufficiency.

II. CONTEXT AND POPULATION

The context in which grantees operate and the population they serve can affect both their service provision and their performance on the common measures. Attributes of the local area such as geography, labor market, and political climate play a role in determining the types of farmworkers in need of services, the opportunities afforded by the agricultural industry and the industries that serve as potential alternatives to agriculture. Diversity in the target population also affects the NFJP as it strives to meet DOL standards. Finally, aspects of the grantee organizations themselves and their partnerships with AJCs and community-based partners drive the types of services offered and the strategies for delivering them.

In this chapter, we examine these contextual factors for grantees studied and connect them to strategies for serving the nation's farmworker population. In the first section, we describe the location of grantees, spanning geography and crop type, labor-market conditions, and political climate. In the second section, we describe the farmworkers, including their background, skills, and employment barriers. Finally, in the last section, we discuss how grantee characteristics, such as their history and size coupled with the availability of services in the community, determine the programming provided in-house and the types of partnerships they establish and maintain in the community.

Key Findings

- NFJP grantees cover many geographic regions facing different labor-market conditions and political environments. These factors affect how field offices serve farmworkers, including how they engage farmworkers for services and the types of services and supports provided.

- The nine grantees selected for in-depth study served slightly more educated participants than the national average. However, every grantee reported that participants' main employment barrier was educational or skill deficiencies. Most sites also reported that limited English language abilities were a challenge.

- Grantees try to hire staff with the characteristics and experiences needed to best serve the population. For example, many staff members are Spanish speakers and/or former farmworkers.

- NFJP programs tend to be the first point of entry for farmworkers to WIA services. Only two grantees were co-located with AJCs. However, six grantees encouraged farmworkers to use the resource rooms available at AJCs, and five grantees refer potentially eligible participants to AJCs.

- Partnerships allow grantees to leverage funding by sending participants to receive available services from other agencies, while spending NFJP funds to provide services that are not already available in the community.

A. Area Context

Each of the nine grantees selected for in-depth study operated under dramatically different circumstances. Below, we describe the variation in context that arises because of geography, labor-market conditions, and political climate.

Geographic diversity. Location affects grantees on multiple levels. This includes whether grantees serve urban or rural areas, the likelihood of severe weather events that threaten crops and farmworkers alike, and the types of farming practices and farm characteristics. All of these factors shape farmworker needs and the services provided by grantees to meet those needs.

Office location plays a role in determining service provision. Two-thirds of grantees have offices in both rural and nonrural areas within the state (Table II.1). In some instances, grantees serve both very rural, and very urban populations simultaneously—either in the same or multiple offices.[10] Staff in these offices cited regional variation in the types of supportive services needed by farmworkers. Transportation was among the most frequently reported difficulties for farmworkers in rural areas. One respondent reported providing more gas vouchers in their rural offices than in the urban ones due to limited access to public transportation. Other grantees built transportation into their programs in rural areas so that farmworkers could attend. For example, one grantee uses two 24-seat vans to pick up farmworkers at 4:30 a.m. and drive them to grantee training sessions.

Table II.1. Rural and Nonrural Sites, by Grantee

	Rural-Only Sites	Rural and Nonrural Sites
Grantee 1		√
Grantee 2		√
Grantee 3	√	
Grantee 4		√
Grantee 5	√	
Grantee 6		√
Grantee 7		√
Grantee 8		√
Grantee 9	√	

Source: Interviews conducted with administrators and staff during site visits to grantee locations from March to November 2011.

Aside from urban and rural distinctions, regional climate dictates the crops grown and their susceptibility to extreme weather events. Most states span multiple climates and can therefore grow a variety of crops. For example, in the area served by one grantee, farms include tobacco

[10] It may be counterintuitive to think of farms in urban areas; however, many small farms do exist near urban centers. Additionally, some grantee offices are located in urban centers to increase participant access to their services.

fields and vineyards, with produce and poultry farms between them. In another grantee's service area, farmworkers thin, weed, and harvest crops from cotton and pecans to onions, cabbage, peppers, and alfalfa. Another grantee, which has perhaps the harshest growing climate of all the selected sites, grows lettuce and cotton. Another grantee's farmers predominantly grow fruits and berries.

Location, and hence climate, also determine the likelihood of severe weather challenges. Two grantees struggled with the aftermath of recent natural disasters. In one site, the economy was still crippled from a hurricane, leaving few jobs in the area for farmworkers. Subsequent flooding further hindered transportation efforts, preventing people from working when they had jobs. At another site, a tropical storm washed out crops, which had to be cleared from the roads with snowplows. Farmworkers who remained in the area went weeks without being paid, and many fled to other parts of the state to pick crops that were not adversely affected.

Another key factor is farm size and its influence on farming practices and farmworker opportunities. Similar to other industries in the U.S., farmworker jobs are threatened by a trend toward machine-based farming practices to reduce labor costs. Two grantees reported this trend and the increasing scarcity of farm work jobs as a result. Positions operating farming machines are typically reserved for high-skilled individuals, and many farmworkers do not qualify. If this trend continues, fewer farmworkers will find jobs unless they are specially trained to operate such machinery. Smaller farms are less likely to shift to large-scale farming technologies due to cost and the labor-intensive qualities of some crops (such as fruits and berries), but because of their size they have limited promotional potential for farmworkers. Promotion potential is further limited on family-run farms, which tend to keep management positions filled by family members.

Many grantee staff thought agricultural upgrades would be insufficient for moving farmworkers into higher-paying jobs on farms.[11] For example, large farms use precision machinery that requires more than a quick training program to become adept. On small farms, few stable positions exist. Thus, grantees have to provide alternative training programs to assist farmworkers in finding sustainable, stable employment. To do this, several grantees reported tailoring services to farmworkers based on the crop calendar. Examples of this practice include offering training programs and classes during the "off-season" or evenings, and offering an open-enrollment format and flexible scheduling to accommodate all farm work schedules.

Local labor-market conditions. Loss of local industries and high unemployment rates contribute to the challenge of placing NFJP participants in sustainable jobs. The study site visits fell in the midst of a recession that gripped the entire country, but many grantees worked in areas that had been losing businesses for years. One grantee with a low (less than 40 percent) EER but a high ERR recently lost manufacturing work at several textile and furniture warehouses. Another grantee that struggled to meet the common measures described statewide declining

[11] Agricultural upgrades are upgrades of skills resulting in higher wages and more hours worked, although the work remains in an agricultural industry.

economies in meatpacking, poultry, warehouse, construction, and rubber, coupled with some offshore relocation.

Unemployment rates varied both across and within states, challenging grantees to work in different employment contexts. At the time of the site visits, respondents reported unemployment rates ranging from 9 to 25 percent in the areas they served. In the most extreme example, there was a double-digit difference between the statewide unemployment rate and the area served by one grantee office. Respondents said there were no nonagricultural industries to tap into for jobs.

Even where growing industries exist in an area, they are not always seen as a good fit for farmworkers. For example, respondents in several sites said that despite the presence of retail jobs in their area, those positions were not a natural or easy fit for farmworkers who lacked remedial education or English-language skills. As another example, the amount of training required to qualify a farmworker for a job in the emerging field of precision manufacturing was infeasible under this program, due to the cost and amount the training it would require.

For some grantees, other local circumstances compounded these difficult employment conditions. At least two grantee sites we visited were located near prisons that release a steady stream of ex-offenders who compete for low-skilled jobs. In one site, a grantee partner said that many local small farmers sold their land to developers and entered construction jobs that paid better wages. When the housing bubble burst and construction jobs declined, there were fewer fields where workers could return. Grantee staff in one state said that the economy was so weak in the area that the best chance participants had for employment was to move out of the area, which many participants were unwilling to do.

Grantees countered labor-market challenges by connecting participants to training opportunities in specific in-demand occupations, such as truck driving and certified nursing assistance. Training programs are discussed in more detail in Chapter III.

Policies and the political climate. Although NFJP only serves individuals who are in the U.S. legally, two immigration policies, in particular, influenced the program at the sites we visited:

1. **E-Verify** is a program that requires some employers to check the immigration status of employees through a national government database.[12] Staff in two states reported that the policy caused such fear in the community that anyone with relatives who lacked legal status was afraid to come forward for services, particularly those that require documentation. Moreover, the policy made people afraid to apply for jobs, including jobs in farm work. The result was that, in at least one state, crops such as blueberries were left to rot in the fields with no workers available to harvest them. Another grantee said the policy forced farmworkers to move to neighboring states,

[12] E-Verify is a mandated program for the federal government and for all federal contractors. Sixteen states currently have laws requiring the use of the system to different extents. Six require all or almost all business to use it, while others only require public contractors to do so (Feere 2012).

causing a worker shortage. In addition, growers reportedly found the mandated process to be so burdensome that they began to leave the state, leading to greater competition for local farm work jobs. This policy thus affected neighboring states as well.

2. **H-2A visas** allow employers to bring in temporary foreign agricultural workers when there is a shortage in the domestic supply. Two states reported having increased populations of H-2A visa holders in the past few years. Given this, one grantee reported difficulty finding eligible participants given that H-2A visa holders are not eligible for most NFJP services.[13]

These national immigration policies affect NFJP participants and staff as well as growers. In all but two states studied, respondents reported that state and federal policies and procedures invoked fear in farmworkers and the community. As a result, NFJP staff spend a significant amount of time engaging the community and building trust with farmworkers as well as collecting necessary documentation.

Local immigration policies and practices can also contribute to fear in the community and limit farmworker opportunities. According to respondents in three grantee states, crackdowns and raids on employers and general anti-immigrant rhetoric create a hostile environment where people can be afraid to seek services if it opens their families to investigation. This results in many eligible farmworkers foregoing services that could help them become sustainable in farm work or another industry or passing up job opportunities. In addition, one state recently instituted new state-imposed fees and proof of residency requirements for adult education classes (including English as a second language [ESL] and GED classes). This requires staff to spend more time collecting documentation, a cost that must be absorbed by the grantee. In another state, its department of motor vehicles permits driving tests to be conducted in English only, limiting the ability of non-English speakers to be eligible for jobs in truck driving.

B. Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Characteristics

In addition to the geographic and environmental conditions that influence NFJP programs, grantees must provide services to a diverse group of farmworkers with a variety of employment barriers. This diversity of individuals and barriers leads grantees to select appropriate services and programs that suit a spectrum of potential participants and their personal situations. This section provides an overview of the characteristics of participants nationwide. It also describes how the nine grantees selected for in-depth study through qualitative site visits compares to national averages for the program population.

Farmworker demographics. Nationwide, NFJP participants are more likely to be male than female (Table II.2). Among the nine selected grantees, one served a largely female population
(71.6 percent), and another served predominantly males (80.4 percent).

[13] H-2A visas are considered "nonimmigrant" visas and therefore do not confer eligibility for most services. However, people with H-2A visas may be eligible to receive related assistance under NFJP.

The majority of the participants are ages 21 to 44. This variation in age and gender may partially be explained by how much grantees provide services exclusively to farmworkers versus their spouses or dependents. As shown in Figure II.1, only 13.5 percent of participants nationwide were spouses or dependents. Yet spouses and dependents made up 25 percent or more of the population served by three grantees.

Nearly 78 percent of all participants nationwide are of Hispanic origin regardless of race (Table II.2). Among selected grantees, four serve more than 90 percent Hispanic participants. Just over two-thirds of participants are reportedly white, and about 8 percent are black or African American. Four of the nine grantees serve a much higher percentage of black or African American participants than the national average.

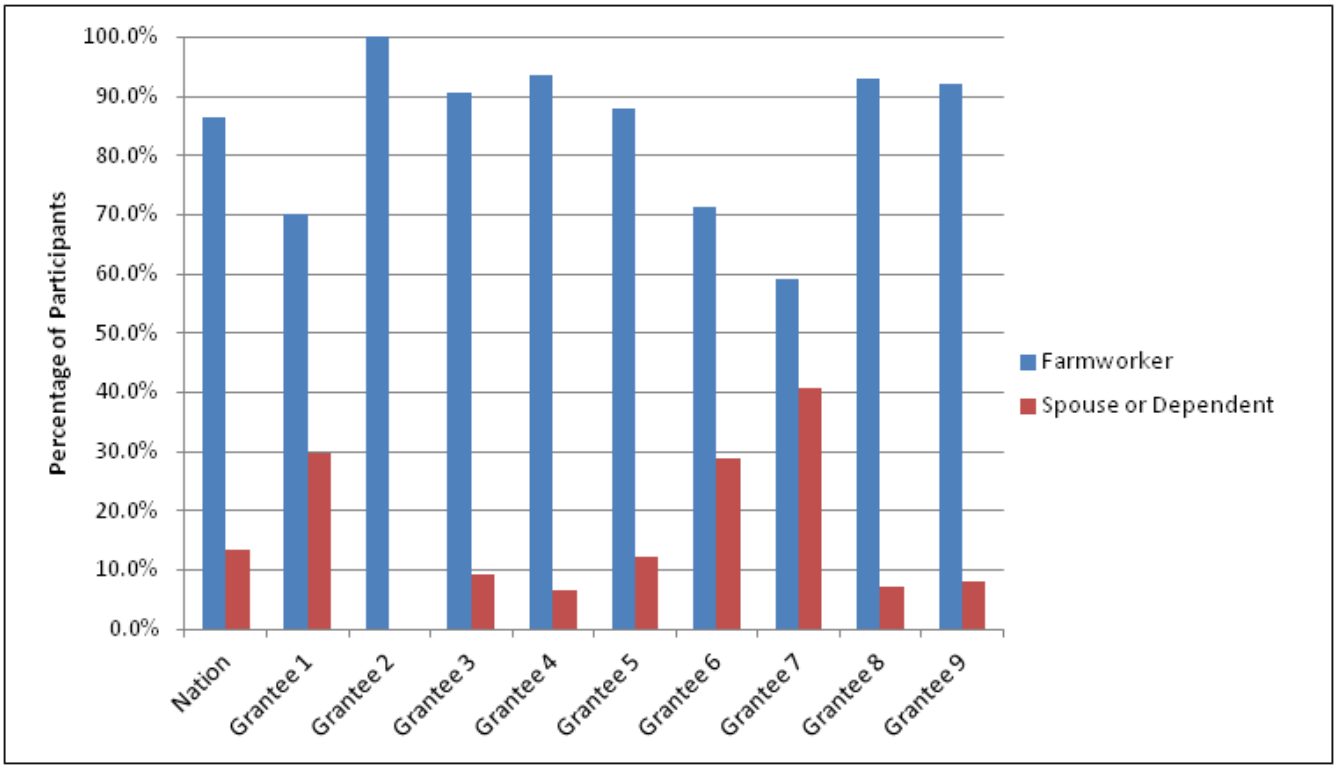
Table II.2. Participant Demographics, by Grantee

	Gender		Age				Race and Ethnicity[a]			
Grantee	Male	Female	14-20	21-30	31-44	45 and Older	Hispanic, Any Race	White	Black	Other
National average	58.8%	41.2%	22.6%	23.8%	29.7%	23.9%	77.5%	67.4%	7.8%	3.3%
Grantee 1	59.7%	40.3%	36.7%	22.4%	22.6%	18.4%	99.6%	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%
Grantee 2	80.4%	19.6%	12.5%	25.0%	33.9%	28.6%	92.9%	98.2%	3.6%	1.8%
Grantee 3	66.7%	33.3%	13.0%	23.2%	28.7%	35.2%	16.7%	18.5%	85.2%	4.6%
Grantee 4	64.9%	35.2%	19.0%	27.1%	31.4%	22.5%	97.6%	99.5%	0.4%	0.0%
Grantee 5	49.5%	50.5%	14.0%	26.2%	35.5%	24.3%	60.8%	69.2%	29.0%	1.9%
Grantee 6	51.2%	48.8%	21.1%	19.8%	32.5%	26.6%	96.2%	97.6%	1.9%	0.8%
Grantee 7	28.4%	71.6%	39.5%	20.1%	24.7%	15.7%	81.1%	80.0%	17.0%	0.2%
Grantee 8	60.9%	39.1%	10.9%	23.7%	32.1%	33.3%	55.8%	100.0%	0.6%	0.6%
Grantee 9	60.2%	39.8%	15.7%	26.2%	35.1%	23.0%	60.2%	77.5%	22.5%	0.0%

Source: PY 2009 WIASPR data.

[a]Categories are not mutually exclusive; white and black can include both Hispanic and non-Hispanic.

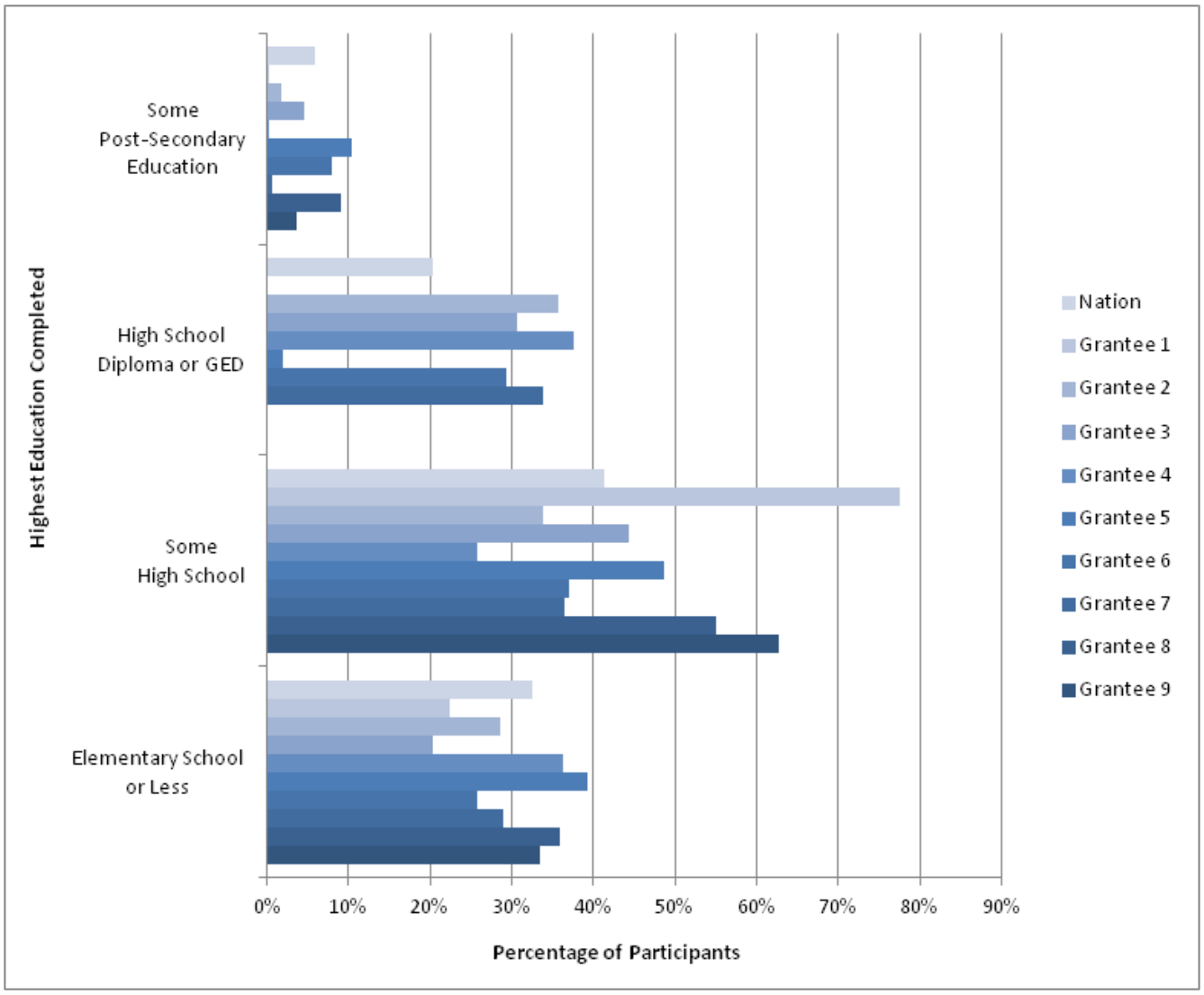
Figure II.1. Participants Classified as Farmworker Versus Spouse or Dependent Status, by Grantee



Source: PY 2009 WIASPR data.

Nationally, approximately three-quarters of NFJP participants have less than a high school diploma or GED (Figure II.2). Participants at the nine selected grantees tended to have more education, with the exception of two grantees. Over one-third of participants served at five grantees had at least a high school diploma or GED.

Figure II.2. Education Level of Participants, by Grantee



Source: PY 2009 WIASPR data.

Major barriers to employment. During qualitative site-visit interviews, staff at the nine selected grantees reported significant barriers to employment among the farmworker populations they served. Despite serving participants with higher levels of education than NFJP participants nationwide, every grantee reported that participants' main employment barrier was educational or skill deficiencies (Table II.3). The majority of respondents also indicated English-language barriers as significant impediments to employment. Staff described that many participants had such limited formal education that GED or ESL programs were beyond their skill level without significant remedial education.

In addition to logistical needs such as transportation and child care, four grantees reported a perceived "culture" among some farmworkers routinely working six months per year and collecting unemployment insurance for the remainder of the year. Grantees reported that breaking this cycle could prove difficult. Many farmworkers do not fully comprehend that,

although they could be paid lower wages per hour at a full-time year-round job, the additional months of work would result in more income over the course of the year.

Table II.3. Reported Barriers to Employment, by Grantee

Barrier	Grantee 1	Grantee 2	Grantee 3	Grantee 4	Grantee 5	Grantee 6	Grantee 7	Grantee 8	Grantee 9	Total
Educational/skills deficient	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	9
English-language barrier	√	√	√	√		√	√		√	7
Transportation issues		√	√		√				√	4
Child care needs		√	√				√	√		4
Farm work routine		√	√	√		√				4
Agriculture-only background	√				√	√				3
Ex-offenders	√				√					2
Mental health needs	√	√								2
Substance abuse		√			√					2
Health problems/lack of medical care				√					√	2

Source: Interviews conducted with administrators and staff during site visits to grantee locations from March to November 2011. At least one respondent at the grantee reported this information.

C. Grantee Characteristics and Partnerships

Characteristics of the grantees themselves—organizational roots, overall size, and staff characteristics and job specialization—influence how they provide services. Grantee partnerships with AJCs are a required feature of the program, but how those partnerships actually work varies considerably and can also affect which services are provided and by whom. Partnership practices are also considerably different across—and even within—grantees, as they are based on grantee structure and community resources. This section discusses the characteristics of the nine grantees selected for in-depth study.

Grantee characteristics. The following are three main characteristics that contribute to the services provided to NFJP participants:

- **Whether grantees are nonprofit or public organizations.** Eight of the nine grantees are nonprofit organizations, allowing them significant freedom to self-govern. One grantee is a government agency that needs to adhere to the parameters of their agency and therefore has less flexibility and responsiveness in changing procedures.
- **Whether grantees are education and training providers.** Services vary depending on whether grantees are primarily service providers or also act as education and training providers. The former tends to provide more supportive services and referrals to partners for education and training, while the latter focuses on providing training and educational programming directly.

- **Grantees' histories**. To some extent, grantees' histories determined their present-day functionality. Almost all nine grantees began serving farmworkers in the mid 1960s or early 1970s and received funding under the Office of Economic Opportunity. Grantees said that the focus at the time was more on farmworker advocacy than job training and work readiness. As a result, some became known as advocacy organizations. Two grantees reported still working to improve relationships with growers who are mistrustful of them because of their advocacy roots and purpose. This mistrust makes it difficult for this grantee's staff to conduct outreach on farms or work with growers to provide helpful training for agricultural upgrades. At least one grantee reported struggling with the perception of being a "handout" organization. Staff sought to change their image to that of training and education organizations, and therefore focused on educational services and away from services like utility assistance.

Grantee staffing structures. NFJP grantees try to match the characteristics and responsibilities of their staff to participant needs. At a basic level, this means having bilingual staff available for Spanish-speaking farmworkers in most offices. More than half of the grantees also had staff with farm work backgrounds. This made them uniquely suited to understand participant needs and barriers. In all but three grantees, the majority of the core staff had also been with the organizations for more than five years, allowing them to build on experience.

Staff cross-training (as opposed to job specialization) appears in two circumstances. First, small offices with only one or two staff members need all staff to perform every role, including outreach, intake, service provision, and participant follow-up. Second, larger offices sometimes chose to cross-train to streamline service delivery and ensure that participants can receive appropriate services no matter which staff member they deal with. Given that some grantees have multiple offices of different sizes, these staffing structures can vary within grantee.

Two offices that chose to specialize have designated recruiters who spend the bulk of their time in the community, and sometimes in the field, gaining trust, describing the program, and collecting paperwork to determine eligibility. Almost every site had someone in a headquarter office who was responsible for the ultimate eligibility determination. Program staff take eligibility determinations quite seriously because each grantee bears responsibility for incorrect determinations.

In larger offices with job specialization, most grantees have a designated workforce or job specialist, whose job duties include outreach to and building relationships with local employers, connecting participants with employers, and following up to collect data for the common measures after employment. The exact responsibilities of this position varied, and sometimes included resume writing and job-skill building. Likewise, the extent of outreach to employers varied. Some grantees applied benchmarks to job specialists—such as outreach to five new employers in one month.

Partnerships with AJCs. Grantees are required to have formal memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with local AJCs as a condition of their grant. How these relationships play out, however, varies among and within grantees.

Most of the grantees we visited are not co-located with AJCs but both serve the farmworker population. Only two grantees had offices that were actually co-located in AJCs, though six of the nine grantees encouraged participants to use the core services available through the resource rooms in the AJCs (Table II.4). A majority of sites also reported that the AJCs referred participants to NFJP for services, but fewer reported referring farmworkers to AJCs. In three sites, some grantee staff sat on local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) or attended AJC staff meetings.

Table II.4. Common Partnership Activities Between Grantees and AJCs

Partnership Activity	Grantee 1	Grantee 2	Grantee 3	Grantee 4	Grantee 5	Grantee 6	Grantee 7	Grantee 8	Grantee 9	Total
Grantees encourage participants to use AJC resource rooms	√	√		√		√	√	√		6
AJCs refer individuals to NFJP grantees	√		√	√		√	√			5
NFJP grantees regularly refer individuals to AJCs for resource rooms or WIA services		√	√	√						3
NFJP staff sit on WIBs or attend AJC staff meetings						√	√		√	3

Source: Interviews conducted with grantee administrators and staff and AJC staff during site visits to grantee locations from March to November 2011. At least one respondent at the grantee reported this information.

The depth of partnerships with AJCs varied from largely symbolic to fully engaged across grantees. At one extreme, AJC staff members located near one grantee were unaware that a partnership with the NFJP grantee existed. In contrast, one grantee hosts a weekly club for job seekers in collaboration with AJC staff to help farmworkers prepare for interviews and look for new job leads. They also share the task of conducting job readiness trainings for NFJP and AJC participants together. One grantee relies on the AJC to provide core services to NFJP participants. At least two grantees provide job readiness trainings and workshops in conjunction with the AJC, and two grantees reported relying on AJC resources for providing job search support, including using the AJC job database.

Regardless of grantees' relationship with AJCs, respondents reported that grantees tend to be the first point of entry to services for farmworkers, and farmworkers tend not to view AJCs as places for service. Grantees cited several reasons why participants tend to seek services from them before AJCs. First, it is the common perception among NFJP staff that farmworkers feel more comfortable working with the NFJP grantee organizations, many of whom were farmworkers at one time themselves, and speak their language. Second, farmworkers may feel less threatened about their connections with undocumented friends or family members when they speak with NFJP rather than AJC staff. Moreover, AJCs can be intimidating, particularly if potential participants need to sign in to a computer before getting services. Finally, three grantees were aware of instances when farmworkers were "treated poorly" or allegedly turned

away from services by AJC staff, and grantees thought this misconception was widespread among farmworkers.

Resource constraints limit both grantees and AJCs ability to serve everyone and result in farmworkers being served mainly by NFJP. Several factors ultimately contribute to this situation. First, three grantees reported that many AJCs lack the ability to assist farmworkers because they do not have Spanish-speaking staff. Because of NFJP's focus, almost all grantees have Spanish speakers on staff and can pay special attention to the needs of the farmworker population. AJCs work with the full population and cannot always be as responsive to the needs of specific worker population. Second, funding for both programs is limited. Grantees and AJC staff reported that WIA training funds are less plentiful than NFJP dollars (because WIA training dollars are spread across a much larger population), and one AJC explicitly stated that NFJP funds should be exhausted before referring participants to the AJC for training. Regardless, both programs are limited and results in a negotiation about how to make the best of both resources. Some reported that this can ultimately filter farmworkers out of the WIA training stream. Finally, performance measures can create a disincentive to serving farmworkers with multiple employment barriers. AJCs have separate performance goals from NFJP. Farmworkers are often viewed as "hard-to-serve" given their multiple barriers to employment. To avoid negative effects on their program performance, AJCs often rely on other organization that can focus on and serve this population. Moreover, staff in two sites cited skills gaps that prevent NFJP participants from being eligible for many WIA training funds, particularly because of their limited educational attainment.

Successful partnerships build on each other's strengths to provide services to farmworkers. AJCs have significant general resources that can benefit job searches, whereas grantees can focus specifically on farmworkers' specific needs. As a result, partnerships that capitalize on these strengths are able to serve farmworkers together. In one site with a strong partnership and co-located offices, the partnership allows both agencies to leverage their funds by serving farmworkers with core services through the AJCs and using NFJP funds to support on-the-job and other training programs. In another site, the AJC outreaches extensively to farmworkers, has a good relationship with NFJP staff and a good understanding of the program, and refers potentially eligible farmworkers to NFJP, while describing the menu of services available through the AJC.

Partnering with other agencies. Grantees choose partners based on their populations' needs, what services they provide in-house, and what services are available in the community. Therefore, partnering agencies and the kinds of services they provide vary significantly between grantee type and grantee offices. Grantees with the capacity to directly provide training and education tend to partner with organizations that can provide social and supportive services, while service-oriented grantees tend to partner with training and education partners. This allows each grantee to draw on its own specialties and resources while allowing partner agencies to build the full range of services needed by farmworkers, an approach that conserves resources and avoids duplication of efforts in the community. The exception is that grantee offices located in rural, underserved areas tend to have fewer partnerships and provide more services themselves. Most grantees partner with community colleges for educational services and find some way to connect participants with GED and ESL classes (either by offering those services in-house or by giving referrals into the community). Table II.5 illustrates the diversity of partner types and services provided by partners for just a few of the grantees.

Partnerships are formed both formally and informally; they are not challenging to create but take time to build and maintain. Some grantees had more than 50 formal partnerships with signed MOUs. One grantee said they had an MOU with their main partner early on in the relationship, but the partnership was so well-established that an MOU was no longer necessary. For other grantees, relationships with partnering agencies are more informal or do not require MOUs. Especially in smaller, rural communities, personal relationships with other local providers precluded the need for formal arrangements. Relationships that predominantly included referring potential participants to NFJP grantees or to social service providers in the community rarely necessitated formal agreements. For the most part, respondents reported few challenges associated with partnering with other agencies.

Table II.5. Selected Partner Types and Services Provided Through Partnerships, by Grantee Type

Grantee	Grantee Provider Type	Partner Types	Service(s) Provided by Partners
Grantee 1	Training provider	Schools Public agencies Nonprofits Churches/faith-based organizations State rehabilitation office	Financial literacy Medical services Outreach Referrals Anger-management counseling Tattoo removal Land donations Help with expunging criminal records
Grantee 3	Service provider	Community colleges Local government agencies Latino-focused organizations	Office space and equipment Training programs Internships Outreach to farmworkers
Grantee 4	Training provider	Community colleges Training providers Migrant service providers Farmworker service providers Legal assistance providers Community action agencies State rehabilitation office	Education Training programs (medical, business, nursing) Computer literacy Safe havens Meals
Grantee 7	Education provider	Churches/faith-based organizations Social service organizations Latino-focused organizations	ESL/GED classes Health care Child care Supportive services Education and advocacy land donations
Grantee 9	Service provider	Educational institution Community colleges Migrant service provider	Training programs (nursing, trucking, dental) Substance abuse prevention ESL

Source: Interviews conducted with grantee administrators and staff and partners during site visits to grantee locations from March to November 2011. At least one respondent at the grantee reported this information.

III. PROGRAM SERVICES

Each NFJP program provides a mix of employment and training services and related assistance. The ETA's goals for the program, published in a 2007 *Federal Register* grant announcement, focus on employment and training services, as well as creating strategic partnerships and collaborations to connect farmworkers with employment opportunities.[14] Without specifying how services are to be provided, it outlines the following activities and services to which each grantee must provide access:

- Outreach and recruitment to potentially eligible farmworkers
- Objective assessments of farmworkers' needs and the development of individual employment plans (IEPs)
- Client-centered case management
- Core and intensive services
- Training services
- Related assistance, such as emergency assistance or supportive services

In this chapter, we describe how job functions are split across staff in each grantee studied and examine specific program elements, including participant outreach and recruitment, enrollment processes, and the range of services provided. We also discuss case management, job-readiness training, job-search support, related assistance services, and training services—from occupational and vocational to on-the-job training (OJT) and work-experience programs (WEP). Please note that the practices highlighted in this chapter illustrate the variety in grantee service provision among the sites visited as part of this evaluation but are not meant to describe all possible services or service strategies implemented through NFJP programs.

[14] In 2011, halfway through our site visits, a new grant announcement was released. It varied from the 2007 announcement in that it asked grantees to provide information on how they would increase the number of participants receiving employment and training services, the training services to be provided and how they would be provided, and how grantees would promote co-enrollment in WIA programs, especially training services (U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 2011[b]).

Key Findings

- Grantees boosted enrollment by using multiple outreach efforts. They combined word of mouth, farm-based recruitment strategies, and marketing efforts. Three grantees used enrollment performance goals to motivate staff.
- Grantees developed unique ways to obtain eligibility verification documentation when it was missing. One grantee helped potential participants register with Selective Service, and others helped individuals navigate the complicated and expensive process of documenting citizenship.
- Eight of nine grantees provided job-search support to help participants find stable employment, with three dedicating staff to job development and placement.
- Grantees helped participants access a variety of training opportunities ranging from working in culinary arts to working on oil rigs. The most common training programs were certified nursing assistants (CNAs) and truck driving.
- Paying participants stipends while they attended training was one strategy to facilitate successful completion of training programs. Stipends amounts ranged from $2.50 to $5.85 per hour from one grantee to a maximum of $10 per day from another.

A. Outreach and Recruitment

Grantees apply for and receive funding based on relative need and the number of eligible farmworkers in their service areas. For PY 2011, the nine selected grantees expected to enroll and serve over 10,000 new participants combined.[15] Enrollment goals by grantee ranged from a minimum of 160 to a maximum of 2,804. Six of the grantees aimed to serve fewer than 1,000 participants, whereas three sought to serve almost 2,000 or more.

Reaching these enrollment goals was not without challenges. Grantees reported needing to spend time building trust in the community to successfully recruit potentially eligible participants. Program staff at three grantees described challenges in building and establishing trust among potential participants because so many farmworkers have relatives who are not legally authorized to work in the U.S. These individuals are wary of seeking assistance from many service organizations, particularly those perceived as having a federal connection. Four grantees said the current political climate and immigration policies contributed to farmworker hesitation to enroll in services. Five grantees also reported difficulty identifying eligible farmworkers because of the sizable number of undocumented farmworker populations in these communities. Program staff in one office said they needed to speak with at least 100 farmworkers to identify 10 U.S. citizens. Other grantees noted a sizable population of H-2A visa holders (temporary foreign farmworkers) who are ineligible for the program due to their temporary status.

[15] Information was not yet available on how many participants were enrolled and served during the program year at the time of our visits, some of which occurred before the program year ended.

To overcome these challenges, grantees relied on a combination of word of mouth, farm-based recruitment strategies, marketing efforts, and establishment of enrollment goals to find potentially eligible participants (Table III.1). While all these efforts were deemed helpful, grantees identified two recruitment strategies as the most successful—getting referrals from long-standing partnerships in the community and establishing regular recruitment goals for staff.

Table III.1. Recruitment Practices, by Grantee

	Word of Mouth and Referrals	Recruitment on Farms	Marketing Efforts	Enrollment Goals
Grantee 1	√		√	
Grantee 2	√	√	√	
Grantee 3	√	√	√	
Grantee 4	√	√	√	
Grantee 5	√	√		
Grantee 6	√	√	√	√
Grantee 7	√		√	√
Grantee 8	√			√
Grantee 9	√	√	√	

Source: Interviews conducted with administrators and staff during site visits to grantee locations from March to November 2011. At least one respondent at the grantee reported this information.

Word of mouth and referrals. Grantees rely heavily on word-of-mouth discussions of their services, usually by former program participants. AJCs and other community partners also provided referrals. To maximize scarce WIA resources, AJCs refer potentially eligible farmworkers who seek services to local NFJP grantees, where available. Six grantees also said that establishing a close partnership with community-based organizations was important to recruiting participants. These agencies provide legal, medical, or other supportive services to the target population and often mention the NFJP to participants who they feel may be eligible.

Recruitment on farms. Six of the grantees studied recruit potentially eligible participants by going to farms during working periods and talking to farmworkers. However, growers have a mixed reaction to their presence. The majority (five out of six) reported amicable relationships with growers, who valued some of the programs, such as heat stress awareness training and pesticide safety, to which grantees connected workers. Conversely, some growers had a more tenuous relationship with grantees. In one grantee office with a history of farmworker advocacy, growers felt threatened by the NFJP presence, fearing the grantee would bring legal trouble for them. For example, growers in one state believed there was a connection between the grantee and Legal Aid[16] because, the day after grantees were on site recruiting, Legal Aid would visit

[16] Legal Aid is a not-for-profit legal assistance organization for people who are otherwise unable to afford legal counsel.

looking for farmworkers to represent. Growers in another state perceived the grantee as a threat to their livelihood because they take participants out of farm work.

Marketing efforts. Seven grantees also market their services through formal efforts. One grantee purchases radio-sponsored ads, and four grantees hand out fliers and attend community events such as cultural festivals, health fairs, or faith events. Others post signs in laundromats and present their services at interagency meetings. One grantee was able to post free fliers on city buses to advertise its services. Of the grantees that did not use specific marketing efforts, staff at one reported that it was because they lacked an advertising budget.

Enrollment goals. Three grantees studied also use enrollment goals to motivate staff to recruit participants. The structure of these enrollment goals varied by program and by office. State and field office staff establish these goals based on prior experience and the size of the farmworker population in each location. One office instituted a goal of six enrollments per month while another required staff to spend three to four days per week doing outreach. Program administrators said that establishing goals maintains staff accountability and aims to ensure that staff spent enough time in the field recruiting. Few offices reported linking their goals to sanctions, though one grantee office did say that failing to meet office goals such as enrollment would result in staff termination.

B. Assessment, Enrollment, and Service Planning

Before enrolling participants, grantees conduct intake and determine eligibility, assess participant skills and abilities, orient participants to the program, and plan service strategies tailored to each individual. The timing and order of these processes vary to meet the needs of each program.

Intake and eligibility. All grantees conduct intake to verify eligibility before enrolling applicants into the program. Grantees collect documentation on applicants' work history, employment barriers, and dependents as well as on their material needs, such as housing, food, and utility assistance. Program staff reported that these early conversations range from 30 minutes to three hours, with the average intake lasting about an hour.

Eligibility verification is a multi-step process requiring extensive documentation collection, two documentation reviews, and determination. Applicants must demonstrate enrollment in the Selective Service, show previous farm work experience, and document citizenship. Front-line staff review documentation, and all but one grantee also require a headquarter-level review before enrolling participants. This additional step ensures that only eligible participants are enrolled; if individuals turn out to be ineligible, grantees are held fiscally responsible for any services they mistakenly provide.

Grantees reported considerable variation in how long eligibility determination could take, ranging from a few days to three to four weeks. Two grantees reported that eligibility determination could vary considerably from days to weeks, even within their own offices. This reflects the amount of time required to collect documentation, as well as the process of sending all the verification documents to the headquarters for the second review.

Three grantees reported difficulty gathering eligibility verification documentation, although they all found ways to obtain the necessary documents. Two grantees had trouble obtaining employment verification letters because employers had no incentive to provide them. Because farmworkers are often paid in cash, they may also lack records that can document past workplaces and time periods. Field staff reported that some potential participants show up with Ziploc bags full of handwritten receipts that need sorting. One grantee also found that many otherwise eligible individuals had not registered for the Selective Service. Staff therefore assisted in this process, which often took two to three months to complete. Finally, one grantee discussed the challenge of proving citizenship for a migrant population and explained that it could cost up to $300 to obtain or replace these documents if they are unavailable.

Assessments. To determine the aptitudes, educational achievement, and cognitive skills of farmworkers, all grantees used standardized assessments. Grantees used multiple educational and career assessments (such as CASAS and TABE). Seven grantees reported sometimes using other tools such as PICS or Career Scope to determine the most appropriate career or training program. Depending on participants' primary language, grantees used English language fluency tests. At least two grantees used these tests to gauge reading and math placement levels, the need for remedial education, and the appropriateness of various training programs.

Orientation. Four grantees offer formal orientation to their program. Orientation typically lasts about an hour. One grantee provides an hour-long group orientation to describe the program and services, and sometimes partners with an AJC to provide the session. Another grantee's orientation consists of a group or one-on-one tour (depending on the field office) in which prospective participants learn about the services and training programs offered, meet instructors, and observe a class. Another grantee uses the orientation period to talk about respect, punctuality, stipends provided while in training, and the ultimate goal of employment.

Enrollment timing. Grantees strategically schedule enrollments to exercise caution over those enrolled. Seven grantees time enrollment to follow intake and orientation so that potential participants fully understand the program and expectations before enrolling. Two grantees conduct assessments before enrolling applicants to have a more accurate description of applicants' capabilities. Both of these strategies appear to help grantees enroll participants who are most likely to stay in the program and, potentially, those who will be most successful.

Service planning. Following intake, enrollment, and assessments, front-line staff create IEPs in consultation with each participant. These formal agreements delineate participant-specific goals and outline steps to achieving those goals. Goals include obtaining core and intensive services, as well as completing training programs and/or obtaining certifications. The steps detail how and where (in-house versus through partners and AJCs) each service will be obtained. At least one grantee considers these living documents and modifies or updates them as necessary.

Participant retention. At this stage, grantees employ a variety of strategies to ensure participant engagement and retention. Two sites use informal methods to assess participant engagement and motivation to attend training. One program assesses farmworkers' basic skills and aptitudes to evaluate their ability to complete training or work programs. In another, participants must complete a language training program before they enroll in NFJP. A client's ability to meet these expectations is considered when determining how successful they may be in

any future training programs. Both of these programs use these alternative assessments as a way to screen potential candidates for the program, in the hopes of weeding out individuals who are not committed to completing training or seeking more stable employment. This also ensures that these two grantees are not using their limited resources on participants who will not be with the program very long and might lead to poor performance outcomes.

Two grantees use additional documentation requirements to solicit commitments from participants and attempt to keep them from dropping out of services. One grantee helps participants secure additional funding for training and uses a contract to explain that participants may withdraw from the program but are responsible for repaying non-NFJP funding. Another grantee requires participants to sign an agreement, addition to the IEP, outlining their responsibilities to keep appointments, stay in touch with case managers, provide complete and honest information, attend all workshops and training classes, and actively seek work after training to obtain full-time employment.

C. National Profile of Service Receipt

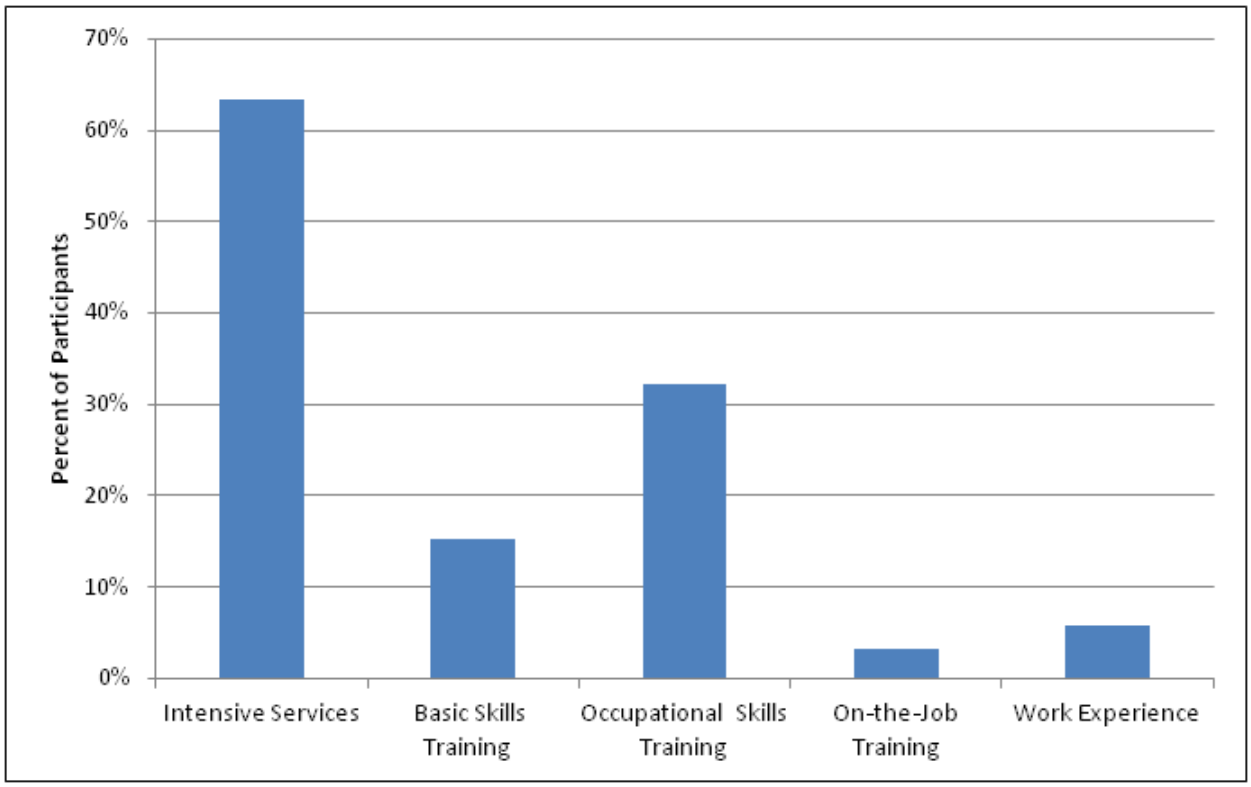
Data available through the WIASPR, the required reporting system for all NFJP grantees, provide a glimpse at the types of services typically provided to participating farmworkers. For each program participant, grantees are required to provide information on their receipt of intensive services, basic skills training, occupational skills training, on-the-job training, and work experience. At the time of our analysis, WIASPR data were available through PY 2009.[17]

Nationwide, 63 percent of NFJP participants received some type of intensive service (Figure III.1). These services can include specialized assessments of skill levels, diagnostic testing, or case management. Site visits suggest that those participants who did not receive intensive services dropped out of the program without receiving any service, entered training without any additional services, or received related assistance only.

A substantial portion of participants also received some type of training. About 15 percent received basic skills training. This can include remedial reading, writing, communication, mathematics and/or English for non-English speakers. About a third of participants received occupational skills training. Smaller proportions of farmworkers participated in on-the-job training (3 percent) and work experience (6 percent).

[17] In the original study design, we planned to collect data from grantees' own management information systems (MISs). We anticipated these systems would include more recent and detailed data on services provided. In consultation with DOL/ETA, we decided not to pursue these data because of data quality and cost implications.

Figure III.1. Percentage of Participants Receiving Services in PY 2009



Source: PY 2009 WIASPR data.

D. Service Offerings at Selected Grantees

ETA offered substantial flexibility in the types of services that grantees could provide. Table III.2 illustrates the wide variation in services received by farmworkers across the nine selected programs and compared to national averages. These data may also reflect differences in reporting strategies implemented across programs. Based on 2009 data, the proportion of participants receiving any intensive service ranged from 32 to 100 percent. Three of the nine grantees reported that less than 10 percent of participants received occupational skills training, while one grantee reported that 98 percent did. To supplement this 2009 WIASPR data, qualitative information from the study's 2011 site visits provide detailed information about the content of services offered to farmworkers as well as strategies for providing each one.

Co-enrollment and partnering to provide services. Every NFJP participant has access to, at a minimum, core and intensive services. Grantees largely use their in-house staff to provide core services, such as assessment, resume writing, and interviewing, over the course of participants' enrollment in the program. Grantees reported using this strategy because their staff are best suited to meet the particular needs of farmworkers. As discussed in Chapter II, program staff from four grantees reported that many farmworkers do not feel comfortable registering with the AJCs, or AJCs lack enough Spanish-speaking staff to serve this population. By contrast, NFJP grantees often employ Spanish-speaking staff members who are former farmworkers. Only two grantees chose to provide core services through other mechanisms. One works with local AJC staff to offer these services. Another grantee works with an educational service provider to conduct educational assessments during the enrollment process.

Table III.2. Service Provision in Program Year 2009, by Grantee

Grantee	Intensive Services	Basic Skills Training	Occupational Skills Training	On-the-Job Training	Work Experience
Nation	63.3%	15.2%	32.2%	3.2%	5.7%
Grantee 1	100.0%	1.5%	98.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Grantee 2	32.1%	21.4%	5.4%	1.8%	0.0%
Grantee 3	80.6%	34.3%	2.8%	1.9%	15.7%
Grantee 4	80.4%	1.6%	53.9%	1.3%	7.1%
Grantee 5	39.3%	10.3%	1.9%	0.9%	0.0%
Grantee 6	98.1%	60.4%	51.8%	4.9%	0.5%
Grantee 7	79.2%	76.9%	39.1%	0.1%	1.1%
Grantee 8	34.0%	12.2%	15.4%	0.0%	1.3%
Grantee 9	57.6%	0.0%	25.7%	0.5%	0.0%

Source: PY 2009 WIASPR data.

Grantees studied reported relying more heavily on partners to provide intensive services, such as remedial and basic education. Remedial education, adult basic education, GED training, and ESL classes are more frequently provided by community partners because grantees lack the staff resources or specialization to provide those services. For example, only three grantees provide in-house GED classes. Three grantees leverage partnerships with the U.S. Department of Education to fund GED courses, sometimes through the High School Equivalency Program (HEP), which helps migrant and seasonal farmworkers over the age of 16 to obtain high school diplomas. This enables grantees to save their NFJP funding for other training services. Other grantees connect participants to partners for their education needs.

To further illustrate these patterns, Table III.3 suggests that the majority of grantees did not rely on co-enrollment with other programs for service provision in PY 2009. Four grantees had less than 1 percent of their participants co-enrolled in services funded through another WIA program. However, three grantees had more than 25 percent of their participants co-enrolled in at least one other program that offers education, employment, or training assistance.[18]

[18] The program year 2009 WIASPR data include all enrolled participants in PY 2009, which ran from July 1, 2009, until June 30, 2010.

Table III.3. Percentage of Co-Enrollments, by Grantee

Grantee	WIA Title I	WIA Adult Education	Perkins Vocational Education	Vocational Rehabilitation	Wagner Peyser
Nation	7.7%	4.8%	3.2%	5.3%	7.3%
Grantee 1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Grantee 2	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Grantee 3	0.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Grantee 4	10.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	37.2%
Grantee 5	43.0%	7.5%	1.9%	0.9%	28.0%
Grantee 6	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Grantee 7	14.8%	45.8%	25.2%	1.7%	1.0%
Grantee 8	1.9%	0.0%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Grantee 9	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	23.6%	0.0%

Source: PY 2009 WIASPR data.

Case management. To provide case management, program staff members typically work one-on-one with participants to discuss their goals as well as barriers and challenges. These services start when participants enter the program and, in some cases, continue after they exit. This process constitutes a large part of early intake and serves as a mechanism for evaluating participants' progress throughout the program.

Quantity and timing of case management varies greatly across grantees. One grantee estimated spending 40 to 50 percent of staff time providing one-on-one case management. Staff at two other grantees provide case management monthly. Another grantee has weekly meetings of entire teams of specialists including instructors, and front-line and job placement staff who discuss participant progress and provide wraparound case management.

At least three grantees also classified some of their post-exit services as case management. These grantees continue to work with participants (and in some cases, employers) to assess ongoing or new needs and to connect participants to resources to address those needs as part of an employment retention strategy.

Job-readiness training. Along with case management, grantees provide multiple components of job-readiness training throughout the duration of their programs. Four grantees provide job-readiness trainings or workshops, varying in duration from hour-long, single sessions to 40-hour curriculum-based trainings. At least two provide some of these components in conjunction with AJCs. All but one grantee reported providing soft skills training, either to small groups or in one-on-one settings (Table III.4). Skills discussed during training range from how to dress and when to show up for an interview to team-building and financial planning. Seven grantees reported helping participants with their resumes, either in small groups or individually. Most grantees (seven out of nine) also provide interview preparation, including mock interviews and role-playing. In addition, grantees help participants prepare cover letters and applications, use computers, and perform related tasks.

Table III.4. Components of Job-Readiness Training Provided, by Grantee

Job-Readiness Area	Grantee 1	Grantee 2[a]	Grantee 3	Grantee 4	Grantee 5	Grantee 6	Grantee 7	Grantee 8[a]	Grantee 9	Total
Soft skills	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	8
Resume assistance	√		√		√	√	√	√	√	7
Interview preparation	√		√		√	√	√	√	√	7
Job-search skills			√	√	√		√		√	5
Cover letter assistance	√		√			√			√	4
Application assistance	√				√	√				3
Computer readiness/ technology skills			√	√	√					3
Writing goals and mission statements, applying past job skills to current work	√									1

[a]We do not have complete information on these grantee's job-readiness training activities.

Source: Interviews conducted with administrators and staff during site visits to grantee locations from March to November 2011. At least one respondent at the grantee reported this information.

Job-search support. In an effort to place participants in stable employment, grantees provide several kinds of job-search support (Table III.5). In addition to teaching participants how to look for jobs as described above, seven of the nine grantees also directly help participants find appropriate jobs. In some cases, grantees help set up or tailor job interviews with employers or provide referrals. For at least two grantees, job-search support relies on AJC resources, such as job databases. Three grantees use dedicated job placement staff, reflecting the importance to each of them of the job-search component.

Six grantees developed strategies to engage employers, though only two reported establishing monthly employer engagement goals (ranging from two to five per month). These strategies included cold-calling potential employers, attending job fairs to get to know employers, and engaging in community events. One grantee has employers sign MOUs stating that they will interview NFJP participants before advertising job openings to the public. Another grantee asks employers to waive required personality tests as part of their interview processes for NFJP participants because it intimidates participants and makes them perform poorly.

Table III.5. Components of Job-Search Support Provided, by Grantee

Job-Search Support	Grantee 1	Grantee 2[a]	Grantee 3	Grantee 4	Grantee 5	Grantee 6	Grantee 7	Grantee 8[a]	Grantee 9
Help finding jobs	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	
Employer engagement	√		√	√	√	√	√		
Setup/tailoring of job interviews and provisions of referrals	√			√			√		
Connections to opportunities (employers, networking events, and so on)					√				
Pre-screening of participants for jobs	√								

[a]We do not have complete information on these grantees' job-readiness training activities.

Source: Interviews conducted with administrators and staff during site visits to grantee locations from March to November 2011. At least one respondent at the grantee reported this information.

Related assistance. Grantees rely on two mechanisms to ensure that participants receive needed supports: related assistance and referrals. Related assistance can include financial support, child care and housing assistance. All grantees offer financial support in the form of vouchers to support economic stability among farmworkers. Vouchers can assist with utilities, clothing, food, gas, and other transportation services. For example, vouchers can be used to purchase clothing or equipment necessary to participate in a training program. Vouchers can be paid to participants or to vendors directly, and practices vary by grantee. One grantee has a specialized support advisor to coordinate the identification of RA resources.

Several grantees said they do not provide only related assistance to a given farmworker. Participants must be enrolled in a training program to receive the service. This reflects DOL's focus on the employment and training component of this program over the supportive services.

Grantees also provide referrals to community and social service agencies to address participants' needs. Four grantees work primarily with local community-based partner agencies to provide referral services. Referrals enable grantees to conserve program funding, by allowing them to rely on other agencies to provide necessary services.

PY 2009 data show that provision of related assistance was common (Table III.6). About one third of participants nationwide received nutritional assistance, and a third received transportation assistance. Of the nine selected grantees, one did not report providing any related assistance whereas another reported more than 98 percent of participants receiving some form of related services. Notably, these data include related assistance services provided to participants regardless of the funding source and therefore may include some non-NJFP services. Data are also not available on the level of support provided to participants.

Table III.6. Percentage of Participants Receiving Selected Related Assistance, by Grantee

State and Grantee	Trans-portation	Health Care	Family Care/Child Care	Housing/ Resettlement/ Rent Assistance	Nutritional Assistance	Translation/ Interpreta-tion	Other Related Services
Nation	31.7%	5.2%	2.1%	14.8%	33.0%	1.8%	44.1%
Grantee 1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Grantee 2	30.4%	8.9%	21.4%	19.6%	12.5%	0.0%	10.7%
Grantee 3	47.2%	0.0%	2.8%	42.6%	6.5%	0.0%	5.6%
Grantee 4	42.7%	1.2%	0.0%	4.0%	41.9%	0.4%	13.7%
Grantee 5	41.1%	0.9%	2.8%	37.4%	21.5%	0.0%	52.3%
Grantee 6	31.2%	1.9%	0.5%	10.8%	11.1%	0.0%	18.7%
Grantee 7	3.4%	2.8%	1.2%	0.3%	0.1%	0.5%	60.5%
Grantee 8	25.6%	2.6%	1.3%	39.7%	57.7%	1.3%	10.3%
Grantee 9	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	34.0%	6.8%	98.4%

Source: PY 2009 WIASPR data.

Training services. Training is a central focus of the NFJP. As such, all grantees offer access to a variety of training programs, including occupational skills and job training, OJT, and WEP. As discussed earlier, occupational skills training is often the most common type of training provided. However, several factors—such as program length, cost and providers' success records—shape how grantees select training programs for individual participants. Assessments and participant interest can also drive the selection of training programs and help staff determine the likelihood of participant success in a particular program. For example, one grantee studied uses the PICS test to ascertain career interest. Two grantees schedules tours so that the participants can meet instructors and observe classes or bring participants to training provider sites to see what the field is like.

Truck driving and CNA are the most common vocational and occupational skills training programs offered by the nine selected grantees (Table III.7). Respondents described trucking as an accessible industry for farmworkers with wages higher than farm work and few educational requirements. Additionally, truck driving offers certification in a short time, enabling participants to begin working quickly. CNAs are in high demand, and training programs are available in every state. Beyond trucking and nursing, grantees offer trainings ranging from oil-rig worker to mechanic to chef. All but one grantee use partners such as community colleges, community-based organizations, or vocational programs to provide these programs. The other grantee is a large organization that provides all training in-house, including training in demand occupations. Across and within grantees, training length varied, ranging from four weeks to over a year, though staff at two grantees preferred shorter trainings to get participants through the program and employed as quickly as possible.

Table III.7. Select Training Program Offerings, by Grantee

	Grantee 1	Grantee 2	Grantee 3	Grantee 4	Grantee 5	Grantee 6	Grantee 7	Grantee 8	Grantee 9	Total
Truck Driving	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	8
Medical Field										
Certified nursing assistant	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	9
Medical assistant	√	√		√		√				4
Phlebotomist	√	√		√						3
Medical administrator	√									1
Electrical Field										
Electrician	√									1
Electric line maintenance			√							1
Bilingual electrical maintenance and repair				√						1
Construction Field										
Construction training				√		√				2
Green building construction	√									1
Green jobs			√							1
Other Fields										
Automotive (collision and repair)	√			√				√		3
Culinary arts	√									1
Business office tech	√									1
Early childhood teacher's assistant	√									1
Plumbing				√						1
Precision machinery					√					1
Beautician		√								1
Oil-rig worker			√							1

Source: Interviews conducted with administrators and staff during site visits to grantee locations from March to November 2011. At least one respondent at the grantee reported this information.

Beyond occupational skills training, seven of nine grantees reported during site visits that they offer WEP, OJT, or both.[19] Work in these programs range from dental and pharmaceutical

[19] Table III.2 suggests that eight of nine grantees offer WEP, OJT or both. However, these data represent practices in 2009, and grantee practices had changed by the time of the visits in 2011.

office work to call centers and recycling plants.[20] The average length of these trainings is reportedly three or four months. Program staff found trustworthy WEP and OJT programs like these opportunities because they teach participants valuable job skills while affording them some income. However, a few grantees reported challenges using OJT and WEP. Two grantees said that employers often do not hire participants at the end of the programs, making grantees less likely to offer these as training options. Another grantee reported challenges soliciting employer participation and encountering employer resistance to working with the farmworker population because of concerns about their English language abilities and work authorization.

Grantees reported limited success with agricultural skills upgrades. At least three programs offered agricultural upgrades for skills like tractor licensing, pruning, or farm management. Certifications like these have the potential to bring higher wages and greater economic stability while keeping farmworkers in the field. However, program staff in two offices reported that these upgrades did not always result in wage increases. In one case, farmworkers still wanted to leave farm work, so grantees' performance measures were negatively affected after providing the agricultural upgrade. In another office, staff will not approve these trainings if growers do not agree to a wage increase after certification.

Grantees reported both high costs and attrition rates as the two main challenges to providing training to farmworkers. First, four grantees struggled to balance training costs with limited funding. To handle this issue, one grantee developed a partnership with a for-profit agency that trains farmworkers at a reduced price. Others leveraged funding to provide services to as many farmworkers as possible. Second, poor attendance plagued some training programs. Three grantees reported low attendance rates among those participants enrolled in training and attempted to develop strategies to help improve attendance. In two offices, these included calling absent participants or visiting their homes to ensure attendance. Another program provided bus service to and from the program to eliminate transportation barriers.

Several grantees also developed creative strategies to facilitate successful training experiences for farmworkers. To the extent possible, grantees choose training programs that offer a tailored experience to the unique needs of farmworkers. One grantee has a close partnership with the local community college, which created a customized training program for NFJP participants called English for Construction, a vocational education program that provides ESL training at the same time it provides construction skills training. Another grantee offers flexible courses and open enrollment to provide better experiences for farmworkers.

Additionally, eight grantees provide stipends to help support farmworkers during their training programs. Stipend amounts range from $2.50 per hour to $5.85 per hour at one grantee but top out at $10 per day at another. Stipends are available for fixed periods of time, which range, according to grantee and often by training program, from several weeks to over a year. Staff at grantees without stipend programs said the lack of income often placed a burden on participants.

[20] We did not collect wage data for these programs on site.

IV. PERFORMANCE MEASURES, TRACKING, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

To monitor grantee performance and learn about participant experiences, DOL's ETA requires all NFJP grantees to collect a standard set of information about program participants. These data allow ETA to track participants as they move through services and exit the program. Given that most NFJP grantees are community-based service providers and small organizations, the sophistication of their data systems and the experience of their staff in tracking performance vary substantially. This affects both the quality and completeness of data available on participants.

We begin this chapter with an overview of the WIASPR data and required data collection activities for NFJP grantees. We then explore how grantees define success and measure their own performance, as well as the challenges they face in meeting DOL's performance measures. Then, we examine what other service data grantees collect and how they use those data for program management. Finally, we discuss grantee experiences receiving TA on data collection and management as well as other topics over the course of their grants.

Key Findings

- Nationwide statistics from 2009 show that 82.9 percent of participants entered employment in the first quarter after exit from NFJP. This exceeded DOL's performance goal of 77.2 percent entered employment.
- Of those participants who became employed in quarter one after exit, grantees reported that 75.2 percent retained employment for the second and third quarters after exit, surpassing the DOL goal of 69.7 percent.
- The primary challenges to meeting performance goals were high participant drop-off, the effect of participant mobility on grantees' tracking efforts, and the need for collection of employment and wage data from inaccessible and often unreliable sources.
- The sophistication of grantees' recordkeeping practices and related management information systems (MISs) ranged from simple paper-and-pencil systems with weekly data entry to field laptops that link directly to state-of-the-art case-management systems.
- Two-thirds of grantees reported the need for additional TA. This included clarification of program rules, assistance with data reporting and partnership development, and guidance on service provision.

A. Overview of WIASPR Data

Grantees report data on NFJP participants according to WIASPR, which includes data on participants' demographic characteristics, barriers to employment, and service receipt, as shown

in Chapters II and III. The reporting also includes data elements for the performance outcomes, called the common measures, which track the percent of participants who enter and retain employment and their average earnings. Table IV.1 presents definitions for the EER and the ERR.

Table IV.1. Definitions of Common Measures

Measure	Component	Definition
EER	EER denominator	The number of participants who were not employed or were under a notice of termination when the participant started in the program,[a] excluding participants who exited the program with only related assistance, and some participants in the "other" exit category[b]
	EER numerator	The number of the participants in the denominator employed in the first quarter after the exit quarter
ERR	ERR denominator	The number of participants who were employed in the first quarter after the exit quarter, excluding participants who exited the program with only related assistance, and some participants in the "other" exit category[b]
	ERR numerator	The number of participants who were employed in the first, second, and third quarters after the exit quarter

[a]The WIASPR uses numbers to indicate the employment status at participation: 1 means the person was employed, 2 means the person received a notice of termination, and 3 means the person was unemployed. The denominator includes each individual whose employment status at participation was either 2 or 3.

[b]The other exit category includes individuals who exited the program because they were institutionalized, left for health or medical reasons, were deceased, entered advanced training or post-secondary education, moved out of the area or voluntarily left the program, left to care for a family member with a long-term health or medical condition, were called to active duty, or had an invalid Social Security number. Of these individuals, only the following are included in the common measures: those who have entered advanced training or post-secondary education, have moved, cannot be located by the grantee, or have left the program.

Although the WIASPR data for NFJP participants provide valuable information about participant experiences, the data set has limitations. Given that most grantees do not have access to Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records, they rely on employment and wage information from supplemental sources, such as pay stubs or employer reports. This situation creates potential problems because the sources are not standardized, which can make it difficult for grantees to record quality data in WIASPR. For example, participants can be paid weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or on commission, necessitating calculations by NFJP staff to properly enter the data. Supplemental sources can be less reliable than UI wage records. Grantees are also not required to collect outcome data in WIASPR for individuals who receive RA only. Given that this accounts for a large proportion of farmworkers served by some of these programs, the data are missing for a key population.

B. NFJP Performance on Common Measures

Grantees succeeded in meeting DOL performance standards. For PY 2009, ETA established a goal of 77.2 percent for the EER and 69.7 percent for the ERR. Nationally, grantees exceeded the EER at 82.9 percent while exceeding the ERR at 75.2 percent (Table IV.2). Performance data on the nine grantees selected for in-depth study reveal significant variation. EERs ranged from 62.3 percent to 95.0 percent. Five of the 9 grantees achieved higher EERs than the goal set by ETA, and over half exceeded the national average. ERRs ranged from 57.8 percent to 93.9 percent among the nine grantees. Four surpassed the retention-rate goal for PY 2009, placing more than three-quarters of the participants who exited their programs into employment, and those individuals remained employed for three quarters.[21]

Table IV.2. NFJP Performance Goals and Grantee Achievement, 2009

	EER	ERR
Goal	77.2%	69.7%
National average	82.9%	75.2%

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration n.d.[b].

C. Challenges to Meeting Performance Goals

All grantees studied reported struggling to meet the common measure performance goals for NFJP, as outlined by DOL. For some, the common measures are not the only means to evaluate program success. Beyond this, grantees reported difficulty meeting the full needs of this hard-to-serve population, troubles tracking participants over time, and issues with collecting employment and wage data as common challenges to meeting their goals. Despite these challenges, several grantees developed creative strategies to meet their performance goals in serving the population.

How grantees measure success. While all grantees strive to meet the common measures, they often have different ideas about what success means for their populations. Although grantees studied do not use formal performance measures beyond the common measures, they reported alternate ways of measuring their success. One grantee said that just obtaining employment is not sufficient for their organizational goals. Instead, they want participants to get "good jobs"—those that are well-paying and stable but also in the participants' fields of training. Staff members look up industry codes for each job participants obtain and see if it matches the type of training program they completed. Another grantees' goal is to "improve the lives" of farmworkers, not just get them into jobs.

Participant feedback and satisfaction are also important to grantees. At least two use participant satisfaction surveys to solicit feedback (though grantees did not say how they changed their services as a result of the feedback). Given the reliance on word-of-mouth

[21] While these individuals did remain employed, we do not know if they remained employed in the same position or if they switched jobs at any time during these three quarters.

referrals, it is not surprising that grantees want to ensure that participants are satisfied with their services.

Challenges to meeting performance measures. Almost all grantees reported at least one challenge to meeting the performance measures. Table IV.3 shows the challenges that grantees reported for participants as well as their own staff. Four grantees reported that participants struggled to stay engaged in their services. In three of those states, staff attributed dropouts to lack of income. Many farmworkers needed to return to work and earn money to support themselves or their families. In three states, grantees reported that many participants return to farm work even after training for a new career because they believe they can earn more money in agriculture than in other types of employment available to them. Staff in one state also said that the area's unemployment rate was so high that participants struggled to find any employment opportunities and would be more successful if they relocated.

Table IV.3. Selected Challenges to Meeting Performance Measures, by Grantee

	Grantee 1	Grantee 2	Grantee 3	Grantee 4	Grantee 5	Grantee 6	Grantee 7	Grantee 8	Grantee 9	Total
Challenges for Participants										
Participants drop out during service	√					√	√	√		4
Participants return to farm work			√			√	√			3
Trouble finding job opportunities		√								1
Challenges for Grantees										
Serving a hard-to-serve population	√			√	√		√		√	5
Obtaining wage records			√			√			√	3
Meeting enrollment goals							√			1

Source: Interviews conducted with administrators and staff during site visits to grantee locations from March to November 2011. At least one respondent at the grantee reported this information.

Grantees reported two main obstacles for their staff. Most grantees said their programs aimed to enroll the "hard-to-serve" or farmworkers with significant barriers to employment. Moreover, the NFJP participants are typically individuals who are not served through other programs or AJCs because of their barriers.

Due to participant mobility, staff also reported difficulty following up with participants after they exited the program to track their employment outcomes. Without employment and wage information to calculate the common measures, grantees may be viewed as underperforming. Staff at three grantees said tracking participants after exit is difficult. For some grantees, contacting former participants is their only way to collect wage and employment information. Other grantees collected employment and wage information from employers, but say the time-consuming process is often futile because employers lack incentives to provide information.

Strategies for meeting performance measures. All grantees strive to meet the performance measures established by DOL for the NFJP. To do so, grantees employed five main strategies for improving their performance.

First, grantees set staff goals to encourage high enrollment and job-placement rates. Three grantees devised incentive techniques for staff to meet enrollment and placement goals. Sometimes this includes setting goals without associated incentives or penalties. However, another grantee gives cash bonuses and vacation time to staff who meet goals. One grantee terminates employees who do not meet established benchmarks. These methods are met with varying levels of support from staff, based on the extremity of the reward or sanction.

Second, grantees strive to reduce participant dropouts and help struggling participants. All grantees want to help participants succeed in their programs. At least four grantees studied specifically designed components to support struggling participants and reduce dropouts. Two grantees noticed that participants had trouble completing training programs if they had families to support or bills to pay. These grantees help participants find part-time jobs that allow them to complete the program, while still providing the opportunity to earn income. Another grantee reported going to participants' houses to ensure they get to a job or training on time, if necessary. As discussed in Chapter III, other grantees design or work with partners who have customized programs that accommodate farmworkers' schedules. For example, two grantees offer training programs with open enrollment, so that participants do not drop out of a program before their training begins. Others have small class sizes or evening hours.

Third, grantees in the evaluation create enrollment policies that target a population they believe is more likely to succeed than other populations. Two grantees use a wait-and-see approach to gauge participant dedication to the program before officially enrolling them. This allows grantees to see if participants keep scheduled appointments. If they do not meet grantee expectations for engagement, staff will serve them using related assistance only, but do not invest training dollars until the participant demonstrates a willingness to follow the rules of the program. Another grantee waits for participants to register with the local AJC and complete any necessary ESL or GED program before officially enrolling them in the NFJP. Yet another developed a 10-day grace period, during which time participants could try out a training program and withdraw without penalty to themselves and without affecting the grantees' common measures. Under this system, the grantee does not officially enroll participants in the program until after the grace period ends. Two other grantees recruit populations they believe are most likely to succeed in the program. One focuses on individuals who are already enrolled in community colleges while the other focuses on dependents of farmworkers and landscapers who do not have field jobs. However, most grantees served as many farmworkers as they could regardless of the potential impact on their performance measures, and were wary of enrollment strategies that would leave farmworkers unserved.

Fourth, some grantees attempted to develop more successful follow-up techniques to obtain wage and employment information. At least four grantees reported developing procedures intended to make follow-up with participants more successful. In each of these cases, grantee staff members are supposed to attempt contact with each participant once a month rather the required quarterly contact. Staff members hope this keeps them better informed about participants' whereabouts and employment situations. However, at least two offices lacked enough staff resources to routinely make such frequent attempts. Staff members in one of these

offices go to participants' homes or rely on participants' relatives for information. Several grantees also reported following up with employers, but this method appeared less successful, as described above.

Fifth, one state developed systematic procedures for excluding certain participants from their common measure calculations. In this instance, the state worked with ETA to classify participants who receive only GED and/or ESL classes as receiving related assistance only, thereby excluding them from the common measures.

D. Grantee Recordkeeping Systems and Practices

The sophistication of grantees' recordkeeping practices, along with the MISs used to enter data, not only affect which staff can use the recordkeeping systems but also how data from those systems are used to manage performance. Recordkeeping practices range from paper-and-pencil-based data collection to electronic signature pads. Similarly, some grantees have rudimentary MISs while others use high-tech systems. In this section, we discuss how and what data are entered into grantees' MISs and how grantees use their data. We also talk about their related successes and challenges.

Data collection and storage. Front-line staff members at three grantees collect data on paper and enter it into their MIS later, while six grantees enter data directly into sophisticated case-management systems. Paper-based systems require later data entry, conducted monthly at two grantees and weekly at the other, into a computer database. One grantee reported that this strategy allows staff to recruit farmworkers in the fields, although another grantee uses laptops to enable staff to do the same.

Grantees vary in the types of data they collect and how they use data. Table IV.4 shows the reported variation in types of data stored electronically beyond the data elements required by DOL for the WIASPR. One grantee does not store any data beyond those elements required in the WIASPR. By contrast, several grantees store electronic data on assessments and their own office goals, such as how many recruitment efforts staff made that month or their monthly enrollment numbers. However, far fewer keep electronic records of referrals to other agencies for services such as clothing or food assistance. Staff members were also unlikely to record the outcome of those referrals.

Table IV.4. Variation in Types of Non-WIASPR Data Stored Electronically, by Grantee

Data Type	Grantee 1	Grantee 2	Grantee 3	Grantee 4	Grantee 5	Grantee 6	Grantee 7	Grantee 8	Grantee 9
Assessments	√	√		√	√				√
Referrals for services				√	(P)		√		√
Attendance	√	(P)		√	(P)				
Pending exit/end of quarter follow-up	√			√	√		√		
Grantee office goals (for example, recruitment efforts, enrollment numbers)	√	√			√	√		√	

Source: Interviews conducted with administrators and staff during site visits to grantee locations from March to November 2011. At least one respondent at the grantee reported this information.

Note: All grantees collect service data on basic skills, intensive and training services, as well as certifications received through training or education programs, as required for the WIASPR.

(P) indicates data stored on paper but not put into an electronic records database.

Data use. Grantees most commonly reported using data-driven reports to monitor their own office's goals or the state's goals. These reports were typically run either weekly or monthly. All grantees review intake data regularly to ensure they are recorded accurately, and that any mistakes in data entry are caught in a timely manner. Grantees with less sophisticated systems use data solely to monitor their performance measures. Those with more complex reporting abilities review additional information, such as whether participants are achieving their personal and training goals (reviewed weekly in one site), or the number of outreach efforts staff in each field office make monthly. One grantee with a particularly sophisticated data collection system uses reports to track participant attendance, the number of days participants have been work-ready post-training (to see how long it takes to place them), each service participants received during their program, for follow-up reminders, and more.

Successes and challenges with data entry systems. Because grantees used their MISs mainly to collect and store data for the common measures, they reported few major successes or challenges to using their data systems. Not surprisingly, grantees with paper-based collection systems encounter bottlenecks when data need input into the computer systems. Some systems are much more efficient. One grantee has an electronic signature pad, which enables quick delivery of participant verification documents for eligibility determination and enrollment.

Front-line staff at multiple grantees reported a problem with keeping up with case notes. Even among grantees with electronic data collection systems, staff reported difficulty maintaining proper case notes for participants. Specifically, staff often forgot or did not have time to enter referral information into case notes.

Several data quality and data entry issues were also mentioned across grantees. First, three grantees reported issues with data entry errors, ranging from typos to incorrect classification of farmworkers as "migrant" or "seasonal." This included improper work history addresses such as keying the headquarter address instead of the farm address where the worker actually labored.

Second, two grantees reported inefficiencies in their data entry systems, such as delays entering data and getting logged out of data systems quickly and losing unsaved changes.

The successes of data entry systems included the electronic signature pad and upgraded systems that cut down on data entry time. One grantee hopes to purchase an electronic document attachment that will reduce processing time in the end.

E. Technical Assistance

Among those studied, NFJP programs are staffed with highly experienced workers, many of whom have served the farmworker population for more than 10 years. In fact, many had worked for 30 or more years with their respective programs. Only two grantees were staffed mostly with people who had less than 5 years of experience with the program.

Despite this level of staff experience, grantees are able to seek TA from a number of sources to continue program improvements. Most grantees are members of the Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs (AFOP), a nonprofit organization that provides training, emergency assistance, and advocacy services for farmworkers as well as TA to organizations that work with farmworkers. Additionally, AFOP hosts a national conference each year, as well as annual mini-conferences in Washington, DC, to provide training and TA. Grantees can also request TA from their regional federal project officers (FPOs). Despite the availability of these resources, grantees identified several unmet TA needs and some successes and challenges to receiving TA in the past.

TA from AFOP. All grantees reported receiving TA from AFOP at some time, although the nature of that assistance varied. Most grantees said that AFOP trained area farmworkers or growers on pesticide safety, heat-stress awareness, or safety with heavy equipment. Two grantees said AFOP also trained their staff around job development. Grantees reported that they appreciated both the training for farmworkers and growers as well as the opportunities they receive through AFOP to connect with other grantees and learn about what other organizations do.

TA from FPOs. Three grantees reported receiving TA from their FPOs. The grantees reported receiving TA on how to meet or improve performance measures as well as clarification on new policies.

Successes and challenges with TA. The aspects of TA that grantees found most helpful and successful or most challenging were fairly uniform. Grantees appreciated conferences held by AFOP, which allowed them to network with other grantees and learn about what other organizations did to serve the population. Grantees only cited two challenges to receiving TA. Two states reported a lack of resources to travel to conferences or to pay for TA. Three grantees reported needing program and policy guidance but could not always obtain it in a timely manner, or at the level of specificity they required.

Additional TA needs. Three grantees did not report any unmet TA needs. In addition, when grantees spanned multiple states, managers at the headquarter level who were responsible for training new staff and supporting field offices also reported that additional TA was not necessary.

By contrast, staff at two-thirds of grantees identified a variety of unmet TA needs, covering multiple aspects of the program. Two grantees wanted clarification on eligibility guidelines and definitions. For example, they wanted to know what industry codes count as "farm work" and how to define migrant and seasonal workers. These questions may have been the result of recent program changes implemented by ETA that altered specific wording and criteria. Two other grantees wanted guidance creating data systems and implementing reporting practices, improving program services and management practices, and implementing staff development approaches. Two grantees had specific requests for working with community partners. One wanted assistance working with community colleges to create needed programs that combine occupational skills and ESL training, while the other wanted DOL to train AJC to collaborate with NFJP grantees. Finally, grantees also wanted TA with job placement and follow-up strategies. One grantee wanted a staff training to learn how to develop jobs and keep up with a changing local economy. Another wanted suggestions for following up with participants after they exit the program.

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V. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES BY FARMWORKER CHARACTERISTICS

The ability of farmworkers to enter and retain employment is influenced by many factors. Some of these are systemic, such as the availability of jobs during the recent economic recession and recovery. Others are related to the unique challenges that farmworkers face, such as limited English proficiency and educational and skills deficiencies. Still other factors are the types of program services and supports that farmworkers receive from NFJP, including related assistance, intensive, and training services.

This chapter presents a descriptive analysis of the relationships between farmworker characteristics, service receipt, and employment outcomes on a national level. It begins with a description of the analysis and its limitations. We then discuss each of the five key questions we explored and their results.

Key Findings

- Participants in their 20s and 30s are more likely to enter employment compared with participants older than 40 or younger than 21, but they are not necessarily more likely to retain employment.
- Dependents of farmworkers do not have better employment outcomes than farmworkers.
- Educational achievement and employment outcomes vary by highest grade completed, but the relationships are not linear.
- Most barriers to employment are associated with lower EERs and ERRs. Participants with the following characteristics have lower employment outcomes than those without such barriers: limited English proficient, offender, homeless, lack transportation, single parent, or basic skills deficient.
- Participants who receive intensive *and* training services have higher employment outcomes than participants who receive no training or intensive services, or those who receive intensive services only.

A. Overview of Analysis and Limitations

To shed light on the factors influencing NFJP participants' employment outcomes, we generated five questions developed through examination of grantee practices. We began by developing a list of questions after examining grantee enrollment and service strategies and the assumptions underlying those strategies. For example, one grantee preferred to provide the full range of services to the children of farmworkers and to offer only related assistance to the farmworkers. This strategy was based upon the grantees' assumption that younger participants are more likely than older participants to benefit from services and ultimately gain employment in the current economy.

Once a list of questions was developed, we worked with ETA to narrow the list to only those that could be examined given available data. For example, outcome data were not available for participants who received only related assistance. The study team also discussed with ETA the possibility of running regression models to attempt to control for the background characteristics of participants that are collected in the WIASPR data as well as the grantees that served the participants. However, after further exploration, the study team felt that key data elements that influence participant outcomes were not available in WIASPR, and the quality and completeness of grantees' MIS data prevented this analysis.

The final five questions identified by the study team and ETA are as follows:

1. Are younger participants more likely to have successful employment outcomes than older participants?
2. Do dependents of farmworkers have more positive employment outcomes than farmworkers themselves?
3. Are participants with higher levels of education are more likely to have successful employment outcomes?
4. Do participants with barriers to employment have less positive employment outcomes compared with those who do not have such barriers?
5. Does receiving intensive services alone or in combination with training increases the likelihood for a positive employment outcome?

We used data from WIASPR as the foundation for this analysis. These data include a small number of demographic characteristics, variables on general service receipt, and data on the common measures. Key outcomes of interest in this analysis are the EER and ERR. To calculate the EER, we used participants who exited the program in PY 2009 (the most recent program year for which data were available at the time of our analysis). That means that their date of exit was between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010. Because the ERR requires employment information at least three quarters after the exit quarter, the analysis for this measure includes participants who had an exit date in calendar year 2008. That means the participants' dates of exits were between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008.

Descriptive analyses of these data help identify patterns or associations that may exist between participant characteristics or service receipt and employment outcomes. These analyses, however, cannot determine the extent to which the characteristics or services actually contributed to or caused the patterns in employment outcomes. Nonetheless, they are useful as a first step in exploring a connection between participants, services, and outcomes. In particular, they may help suggest areas that merit further examination, identify areas in which there may be a disconnect between participant needs and services, or reveal areas where key outcomes measures may be misleading.

B. Relationship Between Participant Age and Employment Outcomes

The first question examines whether younger participants are more likely to have successful employment outcomes than older participants. During site-visit interviews, some NFJP staff suggested that younger participants in the program would have better performance outcomes

than older participants. They justified this argument in two ways. First, they argued that younger participants are more educated than older participants, and participants with higher levels of education have the skills needed to find and retain employment. Second, younger participants are more likely than older participants to be proficient in English, and strong English language skills lend themselves to better employment outcomes. These assumptions run counter to the evidence shown in prior research studies that indicate better employment outcomes for older participants who receive education and training services (Heckman et al. 1999; Bloom et al. 1997). However, the unique characteristics of the farmworker population make it worthwhile exploring the relationship between age and employment success.

The data analysis suggests that participants in their 20s and 30s are more likely to enter employment compared with participants older than 40 or younger than 21, but they are not necessarily more likely to retain employment. Table V.1 shows that the EER is highest for the cohorts ages 21 to 30 and 31 to 40, slightly lower for those under 21 and those between 40 and 60 years old, with a substantial drop off after age 60. Rates range from a high of 83.29 percent for those aged 31 to 40 to a low of 70.77 percent for those over 60 years old. The cohorts between age 21 and 40 also represent a slightly higher proportion of the successes than they do of the total population. For example, those 21 to 30 years old account for 26.45 percent of participants but 27.12 percent of successes, a difference of 0.67 percent.

Table V.1. EER by Age for PY 2009

Age	Numerator	Denominator	EER	Percentage of All Successes	Percentage in Age Range	Difference in Percentage
Under 21	1,674	2,111	79.30%	28.71%	29.39%	-0.68%
21–30	1,581	1,900	83.21%	27.12%	26.45%	0.67%
31–40	1,176	1,412	83.29%	20.17%	19.66%	0.51%
41–50	958	1,202	79.70%	16.43%	16.73%	-0.30%
51–60	395	493	80.12%	6.78%	6.86%	-0.09%
Over 60	46	65	70.77%	0.79%	0.90%	-0.12%
Total	5,830	7,183	81.16%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a

Source: PY 2009 WIASPR data.

By contrast, the ERR seems more directly related to a participant's age. As Table V.2 demonstrates, those under 21 have the highest ERR at 77.02 percent, and those over 60 have ERR of 67.44 percent. All age groups under 50 have similar ERR rates, whereas those ages 51 and over show a significant decrease. In addition, comparing the proportion of participants in each age group to the proportion of successes they represent reveals little variation; those under 21 represent 0.70 percent more successes than their percentage of the general population, and those ages 51 to 60 represent 0.85 percent less of the successes than they do of total exiters in the denominator.

Table V.2. ERR by Age for 2008

Age	Numerator	Denominator	ERR	Percentage of All Successes	Percentage in Age Range	Difference in Percentage
Under 21	1,307	1,697	77.02%	26.55%	25.85%	0.70%
21–30	1,319	1,763	74.82%	26.79%	26.85%	-0.06%
31–40	1,072	1,396	76.79%	21.78%	21.26%	0.51%
41–50	843	1,136	74.21%	17.12%	17.30%	-0.18%
51–60	324	488	66.39%	6.58%	7.43%	-0.85%
Over 60	58	86	67.44%	1.18%	1.31%	-0.13%
Total	4,923	6,566	74.98%	n.a	n.a.	n.a.

Source: 2008 WIASPR data.

C. Relationship Between Dependent Status and Employment Outcomes

The second question explores whether dependents of farmworkers are more likely to have positive employment outcomes than the farmworkers themselves. This question arose because dependents of farmworkers are perceived by some grantees to be more likely to succeed, given that they are younger, English proficient, and better educated than farmworkers. Please note that the WIASPR does not provide information to disaggregate spouses from other dependents, so both groups are combined for this analysis.

Analysis of WIASPR data does not support the assumption that dependents have better employment outcomes than farmworkers. As shown in Table V.3, dependents and spouses have an EER that is 11.2 percentage points lower than the EER for farmworkers. When comparing the percentage of participants in the measure by status to the percentage of successes by status, the data show that dependents and spouses have 1.98 percent more successes than their percentage of the population.

Table V.3. EER by Farmworker Status for PY 2009

Farmworker Status	Numerator	Denominator	EER	Percentage of All Successes	Percentage in Status	Difference in Percentage
Farmworker	4,934	5,937	83.11%	84.63%	82.65%	1.98%
Dependent/spouse	896	1,246	71.91%	15.37%	17.35%	-1.98%
Total	5,830	7,183	81.16%	n.a	n.a.	n.a.

Source: PY 2009 WIASPR data.

It does not appear that dependents and spouses are more likely to retain employment than farmworkers are. First, the ERR for farmworkers is 2.36 percentage points higher than the rate for dependents and spouses (Table V.4). Second, the percentage of ERR successes for each group does not vary significantly from their percentage in status. In particular, 86.11 percent of the population are farmworkers, and farmworkers make up 86.53 percent of all successes.

Table V.4. ERR by Farmworker Status for 2008

Farmworker Status	Numerator	Denominator	ERR	Percentage of All Successes	Percentage in Status	Difference in Percentage
Farmworker	4,260	5,654	75.34%	86.53%	86.11%	0.42%
Dependent/spouse	663	912	72.70%	13.47%	13.89%	-0.42%
Total	4,923	6,566	74.98%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Source: 2008 WIASPR data.

D. Relationship Between Education and Employment Outcomes

The third question investigated whether higher levels of education have a greater probability of positive employment outcomes. Statistics show that more-educated individuals earn higher wages and are less likely to be unemployed (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2012). While these positive correlations between education and labor-market outcomes could simply reflect higher-ability individuals choosing to acquire more education, a large body of literature confirms the notion that these positive effects are causal (see Card [1999] for a review). Thus, there is research support for the assumptions beyond this hypothesis.

Results from this analysis show that the EER varies by highest grade completed, but the relationship is not linear (Table V.5). In fact, those who earned a bachelor's degree have an EER of 82.86 percent, while those with other post-secondary school degrees or certificates have a 97.67 percent EER, and associates degree holders have a 92.98 percent EER. It may be that those with associate's degrees or other post-secondary certifications may have received specialized training prior to entering NFJP that helped them to successfully obtain employment, but information is not available to examine this logic. It is also important to note that individuals with postsecondary education make up only 6 percent of the total population, so it is hard to draw strong conclusions due to small sample sizes.

When examining the proportion of successes relative to the total proportion of participants by education level, the results do not support the hypothesis that more education is related to improved employment outcomes. As the level of education increases, there is not a corresponding increase in the proportion of successes compared to the proportion in the educational category; the pattern is inconsistent. Again, small sample sizes in some of the most highly educated groups make this analysis difficult to interpret.

Table V.5. EER by Highest School Grade for PY 2009

Highest Grade Completed	Numerator	Denominator	EER	Percentage of All Success	Percentage in Education Category	Difference in Percentage
No school completed	286	316	90.51%	4.91%	4.40%	0.51%
Grades 1–8	1,019	1,288	79.11%	17.48%	17.93%	-0.45%
Grades 9–11	1,593	2,031	78.43%	27.32%	28.28%	-0.95%
Grade 12, no diploma	1,011	1,215	83.21%	17.34%	16.91%	0.43%
Grade 12 and HS diploma	1,227	1,481	82.85%	21.05%	20.62%	0.43%
Grade 12 and GED or equivalent	334	421	79.33%	5.73%	5.86%	-0.13%
Some college	234	294	79.59%	4.01%	4.09%	-0.08%
Associate's degree	53	57	92.98%	0.91%	0.79%	0.12%
Bachelor's degree	29	35	82.86%	0.50%	0.49%	0.01%
More than bachelor's degree	2	2	100.00%	0.03%	0.03%	0.01%
Other post-secondary degree or certificate	42	43	97.67%	0.72%	0.60%	0.12%
Total	5,830	7,183	81.16%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Source: PY 2009 WIASPR data.

The ERR results by education level are similar to those for the EER (Table V.6). The retention rates do not steadily increase as education increases but vary across the education categories. The highest ERR is 100 percent for those with an associate's degree and the lowest is 53.85 percent for those with a bachelor's degree. The lack of a trend is also apparent when comparing the percentage of successes to the percentage of the total populations for each educational category.

Table V.6. ERR by Highest Grade Completed for 2008

Highest Grade Completed	Numerator	Denominator	ERR	Percentage of All Successes	Percentage in Education Category	Difference in Percentage
No school completed	329	367	89.65%	6.68%	5.59%	1.09%
Grades 1–8	874	1,308	66.82%	17.75%	19.92%	-2.17%
Grades 9–11	1,304	1,853	70.37%	26.49%	28.22%	-1.73%
Grade 12, no diploma	713	968	73.66%	14.48%	14.74%	-0.26%
Grade 12 and HS diploma	1,054	1,268	83.12%	21.41%	19.31%	2.10%
Grade 12 and GED or equivalent	319	399	79.95%	6.48%	6.08%	0.40%
Some college	187	242	77.27%	3.80%	3.69%	0.11%
Associate's degree	37	37	100.00%	0.75%	0.56%	0.19%
Bachelor's degree	14	26	53.85%	0.28%	0.40%	-0.11%
More than bachelor's degree	4	5	80.00%	0.08%	0.08%	0.01%
Other post-secondary degree or certificate	88	93	94.62%	1.79%	1.42%	0.37%
Total	4,923	6,566	74.98%	n.a	n.a	n.a

Source: 2008 WIASPR data.

E. Relationship Between Participant Barriers and Employment Outcomes

The next question examines whether participants with barriers to employment are less likely to have positive employment outcomes than those who do not have such barriers. Specifically, the WIASPR contains data on the following barriers: limited English proficiency, offender status, homelessness, lack of work history, long-term agricultural employment, lack of transportation, single parenthood, disability, and basic skills deficiency.[22] These data are collected by NFJP staff at the time of enrollment into the program. Research highlights that a number of populations, such as individuals with learning disabilities or mental health problems, ex-offenders, and limited English and non-English speakers, are considered "hard-to-serve"

[22] Participants who have more than one barrier are included in the calculations for each barrier they have.

populations (Dion et al. 1999). A study by Brown (2001) also indicates that transitions from welfare to employment were often impeded by factors such as substance abuse, domestic violence, health problems, criminal records, low basic skills, and language barriers. Thus, it is worth exploring how key barriers relate to employment outcomes for NFJP participants.

Table V.7 shows that most barriers to employment are associated with lower EERs, though others are not. Participants with limited English proficiency, who are offenders, are homeless, lack transportation, are single parents, have a disability, or are basic skills deficient have lower EERs than those without these barriers. However, those who lack a work history or have long-term agricultural employment have higher EERs than those who do not have these barriers. Unfortunately, data are not available to explain why these patterns may occur and how the NFJP may or may not influence the outcomes of these different groups.

Table V.7. EER by Barrier to Employment for PY 2009

Barrier		Numerator	Denominator	EER
Limited English	Yes	2,019	2,492	81.02%
	No	3,811	4,691	81.24%
Offender	Yes	260	333	78.08%
	No	5,570	6,850	81.31%
Homeless	Yes	136	180	75.56%
	No	5,694	7,003	81.31%
Lacks work history	Yes	3,486	4,239	82.24%
	No	2,344	2,944	79.62%
Long-term agricultural employment	Yes	2,424	2,860	84.76%
	No	3,406	4,323	78.79%
Lacks transportation	Yes	863	1,167	73.95%
	No	4,967	6,016	82.56%
Single parent	Yes	1,128	1,390	81.15%
	No	4,702	5,793	81.17%
Disability	Yes	115	153	75.16%
	No	5,715	7,030	81.29%
Deficient in basic skills	Yes	1,945	2,528	76.94%
	No	3,885	4,655	83.46%

Source: PY 2009 WIASPR data.

Table V.8 shows that participants with most of the barriers to employment have lower ERRs than those who do not have these barriers. The barriers associated with lower ERRs are the following: limited English proficiency, offender status, homelessness, lack of transportation, single parenthood, and deficiency in basic skills. This list differs slightly from that associated with a lower EER, but the cause of this variation is not clear. The two barriers that appear to have a positive correlation with both measures are lacking work history and having a history of long-term agricultural employment.

Table V.8. ERR by Barrier to Employment for 2008

Barrier		Numerator	Denominator	ERR
Limited English	Yes	1,644	2,387	68.87%
	No	3,279	4,179	78.46%
Offender	Yes	204	296	68.92%
	No	4,719	6,270	75.26%
Homeless	Yes	86	141	60.99%
	No	4,837	6,425	75.28%
Lacks work history	Yes	3,108	3,956	78.56%
	No	1,815	2,610	69.54%
Long-term agricultural employment	Yes	2,497	3,184	78.42%
	No	2,426	3,382	71.73%
Lacks transportation	Yes	794	1,093	72.64%
	No	4,129	5,473	75.44%
Single parent	Yes	1,003	1,354	74.08%
	No	3,920	5,212	75.21%
Disability	Yes	101	124	81.45%
	No	4,822	6,442	74.85%
Basic skills deficient	Yes	1,692	2,367	71.48%
	No	3,231	4,199	76.95%

Source: 2008 WIASPR data.

The study team also examined whether the number of barriers is associated with better or worse employment outcomes. As Table V.9 shows, the differences across EER by number of barriers do not decline in a straight line. The EER rate for those with no barriers is slightly less than the EER for those with one barrier. Further, the percentage of successes across the three categories is relatively similar to the percentage in each category.

Table V.9. EER by Number of Barriers for PY 2009

Number of Barriers	Numerator	Denominator	EER	Percentage of All Successes	Percentage in Status	Difference in Percentage
None	552	680	81.18%	9.47%	9.47%	0.00%
One	1,422	1,745	81.49%	24.39%	24.29%	0.10%
More than one	3,856	4,758	81.04%	66.14%	66.24%	-0.10%
Total	5,830	7,183	81.16%	n.a	n.a	n.a

Source: PY 2009 WIASPR data.

The ERR results provide similar results (Table V.10). The ERR does not decline as the number of barriers increase. In fact, for the 2008 data, the ERR decreases slightly as the number of barriers increases. As with the EER, the percentage of successes by number of barriers is relatively similar to the percentage in the category.

Table V.10. ERR by Number of Barriers for 2008

Number of Barriers	Numerator	Denominator	ERR	Percentage of All Successes	Percentage in Status	Difference in Percentage
None	333	470	70.85%	6.76%	7.16%	-0.39%
One	1,065	1,407	75.69%	21.63%	21.43%	0.20%
More than one	3,525	4,689	75.18%	71.60%	71.41%	0.19%
Total	4,923	6,566	74.98%	n.a	n.a	n.a

Source: 2008 WIASPR data.

F. Relationship Between Service Receipt and Employment Outcomes

The fifth and final question examines whether receiving intensive services alone or in combination with training is correlated with positive employment outcomes. If level of service receipt and employment outcomes are correlated, those who received no intensive or training services would have lower rates of employment and retention than those who only received intensive services, and those who only received intensive services would have lower rates of employment and retention than those who received both intensive and training services.[23]

The results for this question are difficult to analyze for two reasons: we lack data on unobservable factors that may make certain participants more likely to succeed than others, and because those same attributes may influence who receives different services and when. WIASPR captures some participant characteristics, but does not include information on unobservable factors, such as participant motivation. For example, participants in intensive and training services may be more motivated to succeed. Thus, they may be more likely to find quality employment even without the receipt of services. Moreover, grantees will only place participants who are prepared for intensive and training services into those services. Those who are not ready for these services will receive more remedial, basic services. Consequently, participants who are better educated or have better language skills are more likely to receive these services and may be better positioned for employment success even before receiving service. In both situations, success in finding and retaining a good job cannot necessarily be attributed to the services that participants receive through NFJP. Despite these limitations, this analysis is still useful in identifying which services appear related to outcomes and in determining promising areas for further research.

[23] One participant in the EER denominator and two participants in the ERR denominator received only training services. Grantees may have followed the WIA service model that divides services into tiers such that program participants must receive intensive services to access training. It is also possible that these cases represent data quality errors.

Data analysis reveals that the level of service correlates with successful EER results, and to a more limited extent with successful ERR results. Table V.11 shows that the more intensive the service, the higher the EER. This pattern persists when comparing the percentage of successes relative to the percentage of the total population. The EER for those participants receiving the lowest level of service (64.89 percent) increases substantially for those who receive intensive services (74.71 percent), and then increases again for those who receive both intensive services and training (83.14 percent). The comparison of the percentage of successes to the percentage of the total population that each category comprises also suggests support of the theory. Those participants who received no intensive services or training represented 1.82 percent of all participants in the EER rate, but only 1.46 percent of the successes.[24] The results for those who received both intensive and training services are more pronounced, with 80.75 percent of the successes coming from the 78.84 percent of the participants who received intensive and training services—a 1.91 percent difference.

Table V.11. EER by Level of Service for PY 2009

Level of Services	Numerator	Denominator	EER	Percentage of All Successes	Percentage of Participants in EER	Difference in Percentage
No training or intensive services	85	131	64.89%	1.46%	1.82%	-0.37%
Intensive services only	1,037	1,388	74.71%	17.79%	19.32%	-1.54%
Training services only	n.a.	1	n.a.	n.a.	0.01%	n.a.
Intensive and training services	4,708	5,663	83.14%	80.75%	78.84%	1.92%
Total	5,830	7,183	81.16%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Source: PY 2009 WIASPR data.

The ERR results also suggest a correlation between employment retention and level of service receipt, but not as strongly (Table V.12). The differences in the ERR vary less than for the EER, going from 73.16 percent among those who do not receive intensive services or training to 75.87 percent among those who receive both intensive services and training. Those receiving intensive services only actually have a slightly lower ERR (71.76 percent) than those who got no training or intensive services. In addition, the percentage of successes by level of service is much closer to the percentage of the total population by level of services.

[24] Those who receive neither intensive nor training services receive only staff-assisted core services.

Table V.12. ERR by Level of Service for 2008

Level of Services	Numerator	Denominator	ERR	Percentage of All Successes	Percentage of Participants in ERR	Difference in Percentage
No training or intensive services	139	190	73.16%	2.82%	2.89%	-0.07%
Intensive services only	925	1,289	71.76%	18.79%	19.63%	-0.84%
Training services only	1	2	50.00%	0.02%	0.03%	-0.01%
Intensive and training services	3,858	5,085	75.87%	78.37%	77.44%	0.92%
Total	4,923	6,566	74.98%	n.a	n.a	n.a

Source: 2008 WIASPR data.

While these measures suggest that increasing levels of service receipt are associated with better employment outcomes, the analysis cannot determine if personal characteristics (such as age or education), unobservable characteristics (like motivation), or grantees' policies that target specific populations led some participants to pursue intensive or training services and therefore drove better performance.

However, this issue warrants further research. Investigation into the combinations of services that are tied to positive employment outcomes, and the exclusion of observable and unobservable characteristics as contributing factors, could help tailor recruiting strategies and guide service programming. To further enhance understanding of the supports that are positively correlated with employment, research on the level of services could include looking at employment outcomes for individuals who only receive related assistance.

VI. IMPLICATIONS OF KEY FINDINGS

This study helps fill a gap in the limited research on the structure and performance of the NFJP, funded by DOL's ETA. This research report provides ETA with critical information to enable it to provide further assistance and support to NFJP grantees. In particular, it presents the grantees, the varied service landscape in which they provide services, the diverse populations they serve, the challenges they face, and the solutions they develop to meet participants' multiple employment barriers.

Although many of the challenges facing NFJP grantees are endemic to all job training and job-search support programs, they are compounded by others that are specific to serving farmworkers. Eligible farmworkers can be difficult to locate; because of family members' work-authorization status, some are reluctant to get involved with any government-sponsored services. Documenting farmworker eligibility can take several months if they need to register for Selective Service or replace lost citizenship documentation. In addition, farmworkers have nontrivial barriers to employment, including a lack of work experience outside of farm work, limited educational achievement, and lack of adequate language skills needed to perform well in most workplaces. All of these barriers can contribute to farmworkers being underserved by other community programs that must balance their limited resources and own accountability with their choices to enroll hard-to-serve populations.

In this chapter, we review some of the strategies grantees reported as successful in serving farmworkers, and we discuss the potential implications of implementing each strategy in diverse contexts. We also highlight a few areas of development that might help grantees better serve farmworkers, and we suggest additional research designs that could help identify promising practices for helping farmworkers obtain and retain economic stability.

A. Implications of Selected Strategies

Grantees shared their strategies for serving the farmworker population during interviews as part of the study site visits. Although this study was not intended to determine the effectiveness of these strategies, grantees' perceptions of the successes and challenges in addressing the employment needs of farmworkers can still be helpful as ETA and the grantees consider future avenues of service delivery and further research. Each site must consider the characteristics and needs of the farmworker population and service landscape in its area as it considers adopting any of the strategies described. Grantees are likely to need to tailor the services and programs to the distinct needs of their local farmworkers, and maintain flexibility to respond to issues as they arise.

Grantees suggested seeking out partnerships that complement in-house services to fully address the needs of farmworkers. Grantees all provide access to a similar array of services but use different means to do so. Some grantees provide education services in-house while working with community partners to provide training and supportive services. By contrast, some grantees provide supportive services and case management through their own staff while partnering with local training and education providers to retrain farmworkers in alternative occupations. Grantees rely on their partnerships to provide unduplicated services, freeing them to use NFJP resources to provide services that are not available elsewhere in the community. Site visits suggest, however,

that two limitations may hinder this strategy. First, partnering opportunities may be limited in some areas, particularly rural ones. Second, some services may need to be tailored to the farmworker population—for example, by offering evening hours or Spanish-speaking staff—thus, existing community programs may not be sufficient without considerable alterations.

Grantees stretched NFJP resources by leveraging other funding sources to provide services. Several grantees found organizations that could provide needed services to some or all of the targeted farmworker population through alternative funding streams. This enables grantees to conserve their own resources without affecting the services that participants receive. For example, partnering with state rehabilitation offices allows one grantee to meet the remedial education needs of disabled farmworkers. This allows the grantee to use NFJP funding to provide further education or training programs to those farmworkers. Another grantee registers participants with their local AJC and encourages them to complete necessary ESL or GED programs before enrolling them in the NFJP. Both of these strategies rely on additional resources that may not exist in every community. Also, grantees should carefully vet community partners to ensure that they are equipped to meet the unique needs of farmworkers.

Co-locating with partners is reported to increase farmworkers' access to a range of services. Staff at sites with co-located service providers believe that sharing space increases farmworkers' access to services and allows grantees and partners to work together to meet participant needs. Space sharing is not always a full-time or permanent arrangement. One site dedicates an office for different community service providers to use for a few hours or one day a week, and farmworkers can sign up for time slots with each provider. Grantees that lack adequate space sometimes locate a staff member in a partner office, such as an AJC, for a few hours or a day per week or month. This allows them to publicize their services more and to meet with farmworkers where they already feel comfortable accessing services. This strategy was reported as particularly helpful for grantees in locations where service providers are spread across large geographic areas or where transportation is a barrier for many farmworkers.

Grantees felt that efforts to make training programs financially plausible for farmworkers were successful. Many grantees said that participants primarily drop out of training programs because they cannot meet their own or their families' financial needs without employment. Grantees use a variety of strategies to make training affordable. Some offer part-time training programs that allow farmworkers to continue working while participating in the program. Some help farmworkers find part-time, temporary, or flexible jobs they can perform during their training period. Most grantees also provide financial support in the form of stipends or related assistance to participants in full-time training programs. Some combination of these strategies may make training programs more feasible for participants than unsupported programs, though grantees must carefully weigh their resources to ascertain what assistance they can provide.

Grantees reported success with training programs that meet multiple needs at once. Grantees frequently reported that farmworkers often need the same set of services, typically a combination of GED classes and ESL or remedial education and ESL. Unfortunately, attending multiple existing training programs to meet each need individually often requires a significant amount of time. Some grantees use, and others reported wanting to find, programs that meet more than one need simultaneously—for example, vocational ESL classes designed to teach English as part of a vocational training program, focusing on English in a particular field of

study. Such programs are not ubiquitously available but may be worth exploring with community colleges or other community-based partners. One grantee created its own vocational ESL programs, but this may not be feasible for many grantees.

Grantees suggest tailoring program policies to provide flexibility to farmworkers and to promote continued engagement. Grantees use several strategies to increase program flexibility and encourage farmworker participation. One grantee reported that eliminating waiting periods by using an open entrance and exit structure enables more farmworkers to begin and complete programs rather than drifting away from services during downtime in program contact. This program also instituted a leave of absence policy that allows farmworkers to temporarily leave a training program to address urgent family needs and return to it later. Several grantees use another approach involving a training trial period, during which participants can test out a training program before fully committing to it. This allows participants to drop out if they find that the program is not a good fit for them. These practices and policies may be easier to implement when training programs are developed and run in-house by grantees, or designed specifically with partners for farmworkers. Grantees using training programs that serve a broader population may not have the same flexibility to tailor approaches to the specific needs of farmworkers.

Grantees developed enrollment policies that targeted those farmworkers who were most committed to success. Some grantees use enrollment policies that enable self-selection by the most dedicated participants. For example, using a "wait-and-see" approach to gauge participant dedication to a training program before official enrollment may yield a population more likely to have regular attendance in the program or to have more successful employment outcomes. Others focus recruiting efforts on those most likely to succeed. For example, one grantee targets individuals who are already enrolled in community colleges because they have shown an ability to commit to an education program. Most of the grantees, however, reported serving the neediest farmworkers despite the potential cost to grantees' performance on the common measures. Many felt that targeting strategies could possibly leave needy participants underserved if they lack the ability or motivation to persevere with the program. Additionally, if the underlying purpose of the NFJP is to serve the hard-to-employ and those not served through traditional means, such targeting approaches may further marginalize this population.

B. Potential Grantee Development

Although grantees receive technical assistance from a range of sources, they still reported an ongoing need for guidance. Through interviews with program administrators and frontline staff, the study identified four specific areas of development that might help grantees better serve farmworkers through the NFJP.

Grantees reported the need for assistance in creating specialized education and training programs. Grantees are in a unique position to identify farmworkers' needs, but they cannot always meet those needs. Some grantees lack access to particular training programs that they believe would benefit farmworkers in their community. One solution may be to work with community partners to create those programs. For example, one grantee considered working with a community college to create programs combining occupational skills and ESL training, but the grantee was unsure how to initiate the collaborative process. Another grantee wanted short-term (one year or less) training programs for participants, but no options existed in the

community. Through years of experience serving the population, NFJP grantees are in a unique position to know what farmworkers need to achieve economic stability and could use this knowledge to create programs specifically designed for them. Although some grantees may benefit from guidance on partnering to provide these services, others may prefer to provide training themselves but need guidance on how to begin.

To improve their performance reporting, many grantees need TA on job development and placement activities as well as strategies to collect and verify employment. Some grantees wanted assistance with job development and placement. In particular, some staff asked for training on how to develop job leads and keep up with a changing local economy. Staff in another office wanted to explore a certification for job development. Beyond this, grantees also sought suggestions for following up with participants and employers to improve and simplify their reporting for the common measures. Several grantees wished they could obtain participants' wage records to verify employment for the common measures, but they did not know how to get them or believed they could not do it.

Farmworkers could benefit from improved partnerships between grantees and AJCs. Site visits suggest that better integration and service delivery coordination between NFJP and the workforce investment system as a whole could benefit farmworkers. Grantees with such partnerships reported that they could provide farmworkers with more services and often easier access to services. For example, clear communication lines and referral systems between NFJPs and AJCs could ensure that farmworkers are served through whichever program is best suited for their needs.

Improvements in data collection and recordkeeping systems could enhance grantees' ability to track service receipt and outcomes. Especially among grantees with paper-based recordkeeping systems, concern about data-entry bottlenecks was significant. While detailed information on services, outcomes, and demographics are collected through WIASPR, grantees could track more data elements. Even grantees with more sophisticated recordkeeping systems wanted to build on and improve their systems. One grantee wanted to obtain document-scanning and -attaching capabilities to cut down on the amount of eligibility-verification documentation that was mailed between field offices and headquarters. Staff felt that these technological advances would significantly decrease processing and enrollment time, allowing participants to begin receiving services as quickly as possible. More efficient and sophisticated recordkeeping systems might also enable grantees to enter more service data and referral information, and might allow that information to be extracted for management analysis. Grantees did acknowledge, however, that data system upgrades are costly and time-consuming.

C. Future Research

Building on the promising practices identified by grantees, and suggested areas for further development, more targeted evaluations could illuminate approaches that best support farmworkers in the search for economic stability. The structure of such evaluations would determine the research questions that could be answered and the usefulness to both grantees and ETA.

First, a systematic survey of each grantee's practices might allow for the testing of more hypotheses that correlate outcomes with specific grantee and participant characteristics. These

grantee characteristics could include organizational structure, number of field offices, staff tenure, and more. This type of evaluation could also allow for exploration of whether certain types of providers or training programs are more successful than others at helping farmworkers obtain and maintain stable employment.

Second, an outcome evaluation that more closely tracks participant use of NFJP as well as other services in the community could shed light on the full range of resources available to farmworkers. The NFJP programs involved in this study are designed to provide access to core and intensive services, related assistance, and training programs. Although grantees told us that farmworkers are more comfortable and likely to access these services through NFJP programs than through AJCs, the study did not capture detailed information on if and how farmworkers have other avenues for accessing these services, or which point of entry appears most beneficial to them.

Finally, an impact analysis involving random assignment of enrolled farmworkers to either participate in the NFJP or not receive program services could identify the actual effect of the program on farmworkers' economic success. If sufficient numbers of participants were available for such a study, an impact evaluation could also potentially assess which combinations of service strategies have greater effects on farmworkers' employment outcomes. This could include an analysis of exactly how related assistance is used and its effects on participant outcomes compared to other types of service provision. The current study identified correlations between service receipt and employment outcomes but could not eliminate the possibility that farmworkers' unobservable characteristics might influence whether they seek or retain engagement in service and ultimately succeed in finding gainful employment.

Although these suggested lines of research could provide additional information for ETA and grantees on the efficacy of the NFJP, the current study provides a first glimpse into the administration of this nationwide program to serve the vulnerable farmworker population. The service strategies described in this report, along with the suggestions for further program development, can help policymakers and practitioners better target their resources in helping farmworkers achieve the goal of economic stability.

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