



April 2008

WASHINGTON  
STATE  
FARMWORKER  
HOUSING  
TRUST

## WASHINGTON STATE FARMWORKER SURVEY: HOUSING CONDITIONS AND NEEDS

# **Washington State Farmworker Survey**

Housing Conditions and Needs

April 2008

Washington State Farmworker Housing Trust

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The **Washington State Farmworker Housing Trust** is nonprofit organization founded in 2003 through the leadership of U.S. Senator Patty Murray. The mission of the Trust is to create a better and more sustainable agricultural community in Washington State by securing and investing resources to address the full spectrum of housing and related needs of farmworkers in our state.

Our Board of Directors is a unique assembly of leading growers, farmworker advocates, rural housing providers and other community stakeholders who have united to address the severe shortage of farmworker housing in Washington.

The Trust supports the work of local housing organizations, engages in research and collaborates with many partners to advocate for improved housing conditions for Washington farmworkers that work so hard to feed us and make agriculture the economic engine of our state and rural areas.

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# Introduction



# Introduction

Agricultural production contributes \$6.4 billion per year to Washington State's economy, with 80% of the state's crops intended for the export market. The diversity of crops grown is second only to California. Washington's farmers face growing competition domestically for labor and globally for price and market.



Graphic courtesy of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer

As many as 187,000 farmworkers are employed in the state, playing an indispensable role in the agricultural economy. The seasonal nature of agricultural employment, however, provides these workers with limited resources for securing housing and addressing other needs. The lack of safe, affordable housing for

farmworkers is a key issue in attracting and retaining skilled workers. In part to help retain experienced workers and stabilize the workforce, Washington's growers have extended the work season through innovation, technology and new crop varieties. Yet the demanding nature of farm work, seasonal income and competition from other sectors of the economy have made this increasingly difficult. Headline stories in recent years have cited labor shortages and cases in which crops have spoiled in the field as a result.

To address this challenge, in 2003, U.S. Senator Patty Murray convened leaders representing growers, farmworker advocates, rural housing developers and other community stakeholders in 2003 to create the Washington State Farmworker Housing Trust. The Trust took on the mission of securing resources to meet the full spectrum of housing and related needs of those who labor in the fields and orchards of Washington.

The lack of safe, affordable housing for farmworkers has been documented journalistically and in a number of local studies, but there is limited statewide or national data available. The Trust commissioned this survey to address the lack of statewide data on farmworkers' housing needs and gather information from their perspectives. Partnerships were formed with other organizations

interested in farmworkers' access to healthcare, child care and participation in community affairs. Over the course of the 2006 growing season 2,845 one-on-one interviews were conducted in the 14 principal agricultural counties that employ 95% of Washington's farmworkers. This study examines the housing findings of the survey. Subsequent reports will cover access to health and child care, civic engagement and the use of public services. Some of the key findings on these related subjects are included in the Executive Summary, but are not discussed in this report. The Trust hopes to expand its partnerships with other organizations to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the full spectrum of farmworkers' needs and aspirations and their relationship with housing conditions.

Of the works interviewed for this study, 36% indicated problems with the condition of their current housing and 32% reported overcrowding. Ninety-one percent said better housing would encourage them to continue working in agriculture. The results of this survey will guide the work of the Trust and its many partners to address the housing and related needs of farmworkers and their families. It is also intended to better inform public policy decisions affecting the lives of those whose labors sustain the state's agricultural economy. While the survey was not able to achieve a purely random sample of Washington's farmworkers, it provides extensive information about the many workers who were interviewed. This is the largest direct survey of farmworkers undertaken in Washington State and the survey interviews included questions about household composition, work history, income, housing conditions, access to health care, community engagement and use of public services.







# Executive Summary



# Executive Summary

## Methodology

The Washington State Farmworker Survey was conducted for the Washington State Farmworker Housing Trust (the Trust) by a team of bilingual and multilingual interviewers working under the direction of Applied Survey Research (ASR), a research organization that specializes in working with populations that are rarely engaged by public opinion researchers. Dr. Alice Larson, a nationally recognized expert on the enumeration of agricultural workers, served as Survey Liaison to the Trust and analyzed data. Interviewers were selected for their knowledge of the farmworker community and trained by ASR staff in survey methodology.

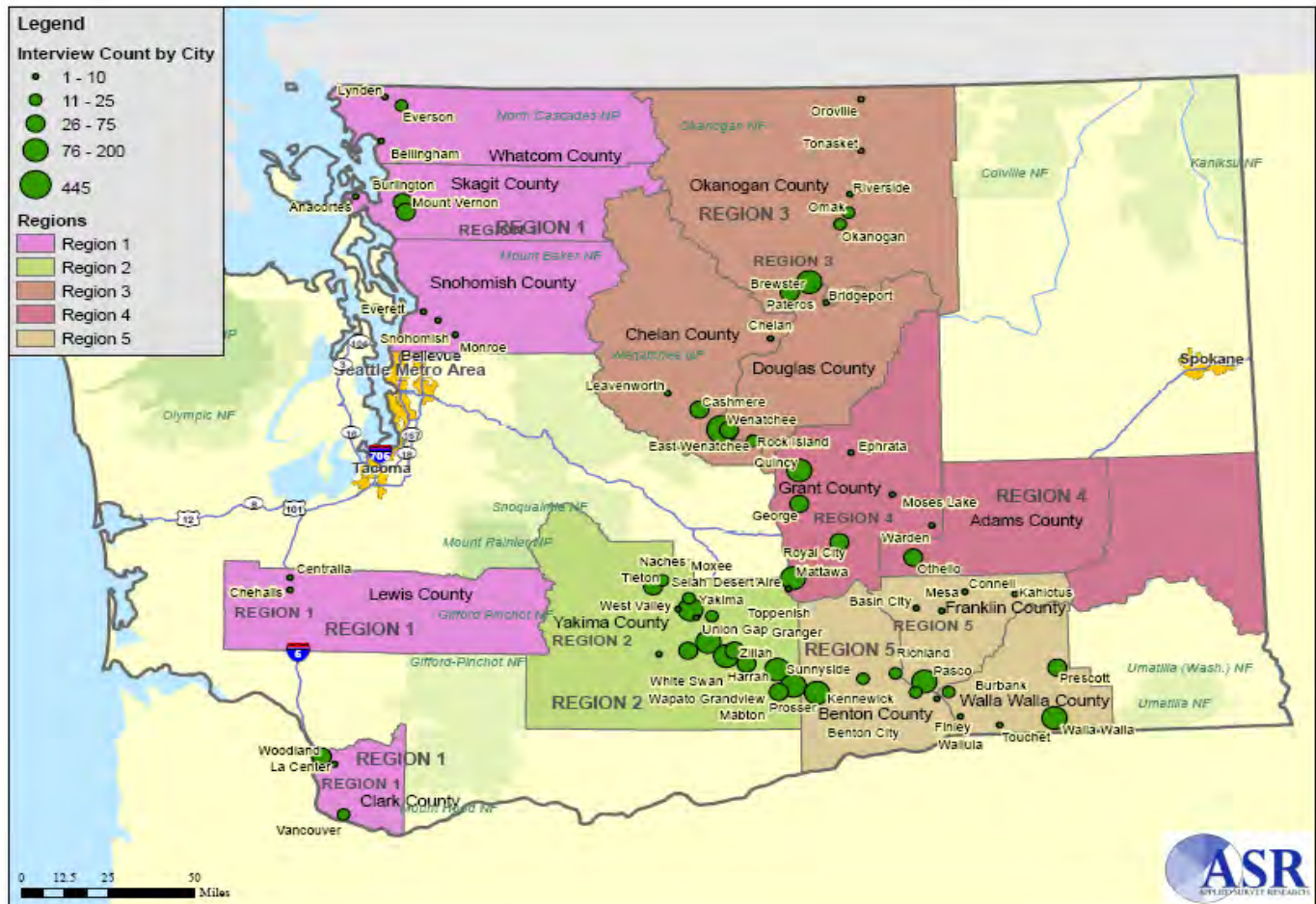
The survey was limited to individuals who were currently employed in crop production agriculture. Individuals employed in packing, canning, processing or supervising a crew at the time of the survey were not included. In order to capture information during the entire agricultural season, the survey process considered the variety of crops grown in different parts of the state at different times of the year. Most of the surveys took place between June and August, with another peak during apple harvest in the Fall.

Interviews were conducted in locations identified by the survey teams and community contacts as being frequented by farmworkers. Targets were established for the number of interviews at each location. Locations were varied and included markets, work sites, laundromats, parks, churches, residences and other locations. Survey respondents received a phone card at the end of the survey in appreciation of their time.



A completely randomized sample was beyond the scope of this survey. This places limits on the ability to generalize from the data the characteristics of the entire farmworker population. Nevertheless, the results of this survey provide extensive information about the respondents and their needs that can help inform both public policy and housing development planning.

Figure 1: Interview Count by Geographic Area





## Major Findings

### Demographics, Family Composition and Place of Residence

Of those interviewed:

- 77% lived with family members, 23% lived independently.
- 58% of the accompanied households included children.
- The median household size was 4.34 persons.
- Accompanied households had an average of 2.57 farmworkers.
- 79% stated that their permanent residence is in Washington.
- 70% did not leave their local area for work.
- 30% traveled overnight away from home to work.

According to the 2000 Census, thirty-three percent of households in Washington are non-family households (individuals living alone or with non-relatives with whom they do not share finances), compared to 23% of survey respondents. This contradicts a common perception that the majority of farmworkers are single or not living with their families. The median household size of 4.34 persons is close to the median farmworker household size of 5 reported in a national survey conducted in 2000<sup>1</sup>. A 2000 enumeration of farmworkers in Washington estimated that 35% travel away from home overnight for work and 65% do not<sup>2</sup>. The difference may be due to any number of factors including cyclical variations in the workforce, weather or methodologies.

### Employment

Of those interviewed:

- 59% have worked in Washington agriculture for five years or more.
- 27% have worked in Washington agriculture for more than ten years.
- 31% work for the same employer every year.
- 35% intend to work in agriculture in Washington for at least five more years.

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<sup>1</sup> Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields: Findings from a Survey of Farm worker Housing Conditions in the United States*, September 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Alice C. Larson, *Migrant and Seasonal Farm worker Enumeration Profiles Study: Washington*, prepared for the Migrant Health Program, Bureau of Primary Health Care, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, September 2000.

- 40% are uncertain how long they will continue to work in agriculture in Washington.
- 91% said more or better housing would encourage them to continue working in agriculture.
- Over 93% of those who travel overnight for work said more or better housing would encourage them to continue coming to Washington to work.

The challenge of maintaining a stable agricultural workforce is illustrated by the large number of respondents who are uncertain how much longer they will work in agriculture. Ten percent plan to leave agricultural work in a year or less. On the other hand, better housing is clearly an important incentive to remain in agriculture to the vast majority of respondents.

## Income

- The average *household* income earned last year by those surveyed was \$17,596, only 88% of the 2006 federal poverty level for a family of four (\$20,000).
- 78% were very low-income with household incomes at or below 50% of the state median income.
- 19% had household incomes of 51% to 80% of the state median income.
- Household income varied across regions, with Region 3 (North Central Washington) households earning an average of just \$12,791 last year, while those in Region 5 (Benton, Franklin and Walla Walla Counties) earned \$21,425 on average.

The data regarding income illustrates the difficulty most farmworkers face in seeking affordable housing. According to federal standards, with an average income of \$17,596 a family can afford to spend just \$440 per month for housing. The 2006 statewide Nonmetro Fair Market Rent for a 2-bedroom unit was \$646. The gap between farmworker income and housing affordability appears to be most severe in western Washington, where housing prices are the highest and the average family income from farm labor was reported to be lower than in other regions.



## Housing Conditions

Of those interviewed:

- 6% were living outdoors, in a shed or in a car. 15% of non-local workers were living in these conditions.
- 36% cited problems with their current housing conditions.
- 30% lived in overcrowded units.

- 42% of the renters were cost-burdened, paying more than the federal standard of 30% of income for housing costs. 19% of those paid more than 50% of their income for housing.
- 11% lived in a home they own in Washington.

If the proportion of respondents living outdoors, in a shed or a car are representative of the estimated 187,000 farmworkers in the state, approximately 11,000 farmworkers may be homeless (living outdoors does not include cherry harvest tent facilities). The 36% who reported problems in their housing can be compared to the national survey of farmworker housing in 2000 that found 30.5% of farmworkers in Washington lived in severely substandard housing and an additional 9.6% live in moderately substandard housing<sup>3</sup>. Housing problems included rodent infestations (23%), lack of heat (17%), poor water quality (12.5%), and electrical problems (15.8%).

Only housing units with bedrooms separate from common areas are included in calculating overcrowding (30%). The national survey finding that 58% of Washington's farmworker housing is overcrowded also included those living in motels<sup>4</sup>. Both figures are significantly higher than the 5% of rural Washington housing units reported as over-crowded by the 2000 Census.

## Housing Preferences

- If costs were the same, 53% of respondents would prefer to live in town, while 39% would prefer to live on-farm. 8% did not express a preference.
- 38% stated they have faced difficulty in finding housing.
  - The major barriers cited by these respondents were:
    - No housing available (45%)
    - Didn't have money for required deposits (44%)
    - Available housing was not affordable (27%)
    - Landlord required a lease for longer than housing was needed (18%)
    - Discrimination (15%)
- 62% of those who do not own their home in Washington would like to own a home.

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<sup>3</sup> Housing Assistance Council, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Housing Assistance Council, 2000.

- 93% of those who are actively planning to buy a home in the next year stated they would be interested in helping to build their own home if it would lower the cost.

The question of where farmworker housing should be located, on farms or in established communities has been debated by many people for years. This issue has been used by some to oppose housing in either location. For the 39% who prefer living in on-farm housing, being close to work was the most important factor (84%), while being close to community amenities (67%) was the primary reason for those who preferred off-farm housing. These results appear to validate the Trust's policy of working to develop a spectrum of housing opportunities that reflects the valid perspectives of both groups and recognizes regional needs and differences.

## Health Care

- 80% of the workers surveyed did not have health insurance.
- 67% did not have health insurance for any member of their family.
- 85% did not have dental insurance.
- 66% have not been to a doctor in the last 12 months.
- 29% of the respondents reported they have never seen a dentist or hygienist.
- 58% wanted more information on health insurance eligibility.
- 71% normally receive health care from a community or migrant health clinic.
- 13% normally go to a hospital emergency room.
- 60% wanted more information on dental health.
- 5.3% reported that they or a family member had been unable to receive necessary medical or dental care during the past 12 months due to cost or other causes.

The percentage of farmworkers without health insurance is similar to that found by the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and Uninsured (85%) in 2000, and is significantly higher than the number of low-income adults nationally who are without health insurance (37%).<sup>5</sup> The 2006 Washington State Population Survey found only 13.1% of non-elderly rural residents were uninsured.

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<sup>5</sup>Sara Rosenbaum and Peter Shin, *Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers: Health Insurance Coverage and Access to Care*, prepared for the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, April 2005.



## Child Care

- 21% of the respondents indicated they have young children in the household who need child care.
- Of those respondents, 20% said they were not able to secure child care.
- Respondents cited cost (35%), lack of knowledge about where to find child care (11%), existing child care centers are full (10%) and hours the child center is open (10%) as barriers to receiving child care.

## Civic Engagement

- 30% of the farmworkers surveyed reported that they had donated money to an organization that helps people or improves local conditions.
- 16% had donated time.
- 12% had attended a public meeting or rally that addressed local issues.
- Time constraints (72%) were cited as the biggest reason for lack of involvement in community affairs.

Of those who had engaged in organized community improvement efforts, the largest numbers worked on political campaigns or issues (75%), school-related issues (64%), sports (61%) and housing issues (60%), followed by neighborhood cleanup (57%) and celebrations (57%), crime prevention (56%), and health issues (56%).

When asked whether their efforts to improve conditions had been successful, the response varied dramatically by issue. 65% of those who had worked on neighborhood cleanups said they had been at least somewhat successful, followed by housing issues (62%), health issues (54%) and sports (51%). Those who had been involved in crime prevention reported the least success (37%).

## Use of Public Services

A substantial majority (66%) of those surveyed reported that neither they nor their family are receiving any form of public assistance or social services. Of those who do participate in such programs, the highest rates of participation are in the WIC program (15%), which provides health and nutritional support for pregnant women and young children and food stamps (12%). Only 3% report participating in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the program most closely associated with public assistance or “welfare.” 3.8% of Washington residents received TANF according to the 2000 Census.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The high incidence of cost-burden, substandard housing conditions, overcrowding and homelessness among farmworkers interviewed for this survey clearly indicates a need for a significant number of new housing units, rehabilitation of existing units and rent subsidies. These conditions and respondents' housing preferences reinforce the Washington State Farmworker Housing Trust's commitment to supporting housing programs that address the full spectrum of housing types with access to related needs:

- Emergency short-term shelter;
- Housing on and in close proximity to farms;
- Community-based housing located near schools, medical and other services;
- Seasonal-occupancy housing for workers from other communities who are essential to peak harvest periods, both on-farm and community-based;
- Year-round rental housing for local workers; and
- Homeownership assistance for workers seeking to purchase homes.


Additional research is needed at the local level to assess the existing housing supply and agricultural trends in order to develop estimates of the housing units needed. Addressing housing needs of this magnitude will require expanding housing development capacity and programs. Additional financing tools are also necessary to access both private and public investment. Perhaps most importantly, local communities must work together to support and plan for addressing these needs to create a better and more sustainable agricultural community.



# CHAPTER ONE

## Methodology

**EQUIPO DE ENCUESTADORES**  
VIVIENDAS PARA CAMPESINOS DE WASHINGTON



**WASHINGTON STATE  
FARMWORKER  
HOUSING TRUST**

TABLA DE RECHAZOS

Tipo de Rechazo (Seleccione uno)	Número de Rechazos (Haga una marca por rechazo (ej: T T T T )
No quiso participar	
No hubo tiempo	
No elegible	
*Barrera en el lenguaje	

\*Si el lenguaje es una barrera por favor escriba el tipo de lenguaje o dialecto que impide al entrevistado participar en el estudio (Haga esto por cada "Barrera de lenguaje" que encuentre:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Methodology

After conducting an Internet and telephone search to identify firms with experience in surveying farmworkers the Trust hired Applied Survey Research (ASR), a California firm with experience in surveying economically disadvantaged populations to conduct the survey. ASR had recently completed a survey of farmworkers in two California counties. Research consultant Alice Larson, Ph.D., a nationally-recognized expert in enumerating farmworker populations was also engaged by the Trust to serve as a liaison with ASR, analyze results and assist with preparing reports of findings. Trust Board members also assisted in various roles. In particular, with the design and implementation phases where their input could be most useful.

Past experience of the research team, as well as discussion with Trust Board members and others familiar with the farmworker community, determined that direct interview would be the best approach for gathering information from farmworkers. Other methods, such as survey by mail or telephone, holding focus groups or the indirect approach of talking with knowledgeable individuals, were seen as reaching only limited segments of the population.

## Selection of the Survey Population

The research team considered all employment categories under the broad term “agriculture,” covering activities in crop production, livestock, dairy, poultry, forestry, fishing, nurseries/greenhouses and food processing. In consultation with the Trust Board, the research team selected crop production as the agricultural category whose workers were in most need of housing and decided to limit survey participation to workers in this category. Since many farmworkers participate in more than one type of agricultural activity, survey responses to work history questions include limited information on some of the other categories.

The desire was to talk to farmworkers throughout the state and capture information spanning an entire agricultural season. This emphasis on diversification and inclusion formed the framework for much of the survey work. Accordingly, the methodological process was designed around three considerations: location, time and movement.



**Location:** The research team examined the state agricultural regions designated by the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) as a way to look at hand-labor crop production throughout Washington. It was found that 95% of hand-labor crops were contained within five of the six regions and concentrated in fourteen counties. These counties were targeted for this survey.

**Time:** The primary agricultural season in Washington stretches from March through November with workers engaged in a range of crop activities. The Trust team understood that there was a potential for different farmworkers are employed in various crops; e.g., those cutting asparagus in the spring might not be the same individuals who picked apples in the fall. Because both worker characteristics and housing situation might differ depending on task and crop, it was important to consider when and where hand-labor crops were grown during a regular agricultural season. The ESD annual report *Agricultural Workforce in Washington State* offered estimates of workers by crop, location and task. This information was used to establish a survey target grid.

**Movement:** Changing agricultural production needs, availability of workers and the presence of housing are factors determining whether individuals who are employed seasonally live permanently or temporarily within an area. Washington has always had “migrant workers” from other communities who arrive when concentrated labor is needed to harvest crops, as well as a workforce that lives locally and engages in longer term crop production tasks. It was assumed that the housing situation and needs for each of these groups could differ and that each should be included in the survey.

## **Sampling Plan**

A random survey of the farmworker population was desired for this research but was found to be problematic given the emphasis on diversity of location, crop and season. Randomization was limited by resources, survey mechanics and outside influences present at the time of the survey.

The primary difficulty lay in defining a sample frame from which to choose survey participants. This term refers to the ability to draw up a list which would include every farmworker so that each had an equal chance for selection if a sample were drawn from the list. With a large enough sample, the chances would be good that those chosen for the survey would represent all individuals who are farmworkers.

The challenge became developing this list. For example, there is no complete list of locations in which farmworkers reside. Using only a partial list, such as labor camps and apartments, would miss other locations such as cars, tents and owned houses. The characteristics and housing needs of

those residing in this latter type of housing might differ from individuals who live in camps or apartments.

The research team made an extensive effort to develop a sampling frame built around work location as a way to randomize survey participant selection. After much effort, it was found that developing a statewide list of all agricultural employers was very difficult. Additionally, a test of this method found many employers were hesitant to allow the survey team access to work sites, while the length of the survey prohibited interview during work hours and arranging later interviews presented logistical problems. The survey period also coincided with a time when immigration officials were conducting workplace raids, creating an atmosphere of fear in regard to contact at place of employment. This approach was deemed not practical.

## Data Collection

The survey instrument covered five major topic areas: demographics, work history, housing, health and civic involvement. Screening questions were developed to ensure those interviewed were currently employed in crop production. The instrument was developed beginning with examination of questionnaires used in previous farmworker research. Several drafts were created and refined through review by the research team, Trust staff and Board members and others.

The final questionnaire was translated into Spanish. This version became the primary survey instrument. Interviewers familiar with languages spoken by indigenous peoples provided translation of the questions when necessary. This allowed individuals who spoke those dialects rather than English or Spanish, to be included in the survey.

## Interview Team Selection and Training

The Trust understands that everyone is most responsive if interviewed by individuals from their own community. Service providers use this approach by employing community outreach workers or *promotores* who know how to best provide information to others with similar backgrounds. This is the basis of the growing discipline of “community based research.”

Local community-based organizations were asked to serve as survey coordinators within their area. These coordinators engaged and monitored interviewers from their community. Every



individual involved in the study received training on interview techniques and survey protocols.

A State Field Coordinator highly experienced in working with farmworkers was hired to oversee all local activities. She traveled continuously during the survey period coordinating tasks, monitoring activities, and troubleshooting. Her work was essential to the success of this survey.

## Survey Sites

Interviews were conducted at a variety of places including food establishments, work sites, community fairs, social service agencies, laundromats, churches, parks, residences, and other locations. Lists of places frequented by farmworkers were developed by local interviewers and coordinators. Once on-site, interviewers were instructed to approach potential respondents using a random selection interval. For example, if the selection interval was seven, the surveyor would stand near the entrance to the site and approach every seventh person and ask them to participate.

Figure 2: Where Was This Survey Conducted?

Response		
	Frequency	Percent
Market/co-op	654	23.2%
Housing complex	870	30.9%
Park/sports complex	421	14.9%
Laundromat	211	7.5%
Flea market	199	7.1%
Food establishment	79	2.8%
Church	39	1.4%
Workplace	189	6.7%
Other	158	17.8%
Total	2,820	100.0%

Interviews ranged from 30 to 60 minutes in length. Surveys were conducted at various times during the day and days of the week. Respondents were given phone cards as a thank you for their participation.

A pilot test of the draft questionnaire and survey protocols was conducted in the fall of 2005. Results were assessed, community interviewers debriefed and revisions made in accordance with test results.



## Survey Publicity

The survey was implemented across Washington during the 2006 agricultural season. Interviews were conducted from March through November. As research began, information campaign about the survey was widely disseminated to encourage participation and allay concerns of both farmworkers and employers. A press release was developed and distributed in both English and Spanish to a variety of media outlets including those with Spanish-speaking audiences and others targeted toward agricultural producers. Public service announcements and interviews aired on Spanish language radio stations. The research team and Trust staff and Board members spoke at various public programs and personally approached key community contacts to inform them of the effort and explain the survey purpose. A logo printed on t-shirts served as identification; these were worn by all interviewers as they conducted surveys.



## Research Limitations

This is the largest direct survey of farmworkers ever conducted in Washington State, gathering information from 2,845 individuals; however, assurance can only be made that the results reflect the responses of those who were interviewed. Although a great deal of attention was given to incorporating respondent variability in regard to survey location, time of year and variety of crops, the study was unable to employ a totally randomized process for data collection. This means that it is unknown if those interviewed truly represent the characteristics and responses of every farmworker throughout the State.

## Definitional Considerations

Service programs, regulatory agencies and research conducted with farmworkers employ a wide range of definitions to describe the population due to the diversity of employees. A variety of descriptive terms were considered for this study and the following definitions were selected:

**Local Farmworker/Non-Local Farmworker:** “Migrant farmworker” and “seasonal farmworker” are terms commonly used to describe individuals who are employed in agricultural tasks on a temporary basis. Usually their work is most concentrated during periods of high activity such as

harvest. “Seasonal farmworkers” are generally considered to be individuals who live and work locally. However, the term “migrant farmworker” is defined differently by various entities.

The two usual descriptors applied to migrant farmworkers relate to distance from work and primary place of residence. The Washington State Farmworker Survey asked respondents for both types of information. One question inquired if workers travel more than 75 miles one way for seasonal agricultural jobs. A second question asked if workers are unable to return to their usual residence overnight because of their employment in agriculture. For analysis purposes, this study used the second definition of a non-local worker, unable to return to their usual abode, as an indicator of travel status.

**Household Accompanied:** “Household” and “family” are difficult to describe for mobile populations. Families may include individuals not traveling with the worker who reside in another state or even another country. Households might include individuals related to one another or be composed of unrelated individuals together, all contributing financially to living expenses.

The survey asked respondents to complete a household grid listing everyone in the household and their relationship to the respondent. This question described “household” as individuals “currently living with you” including related family members and “other individuals that you help to support financially.”

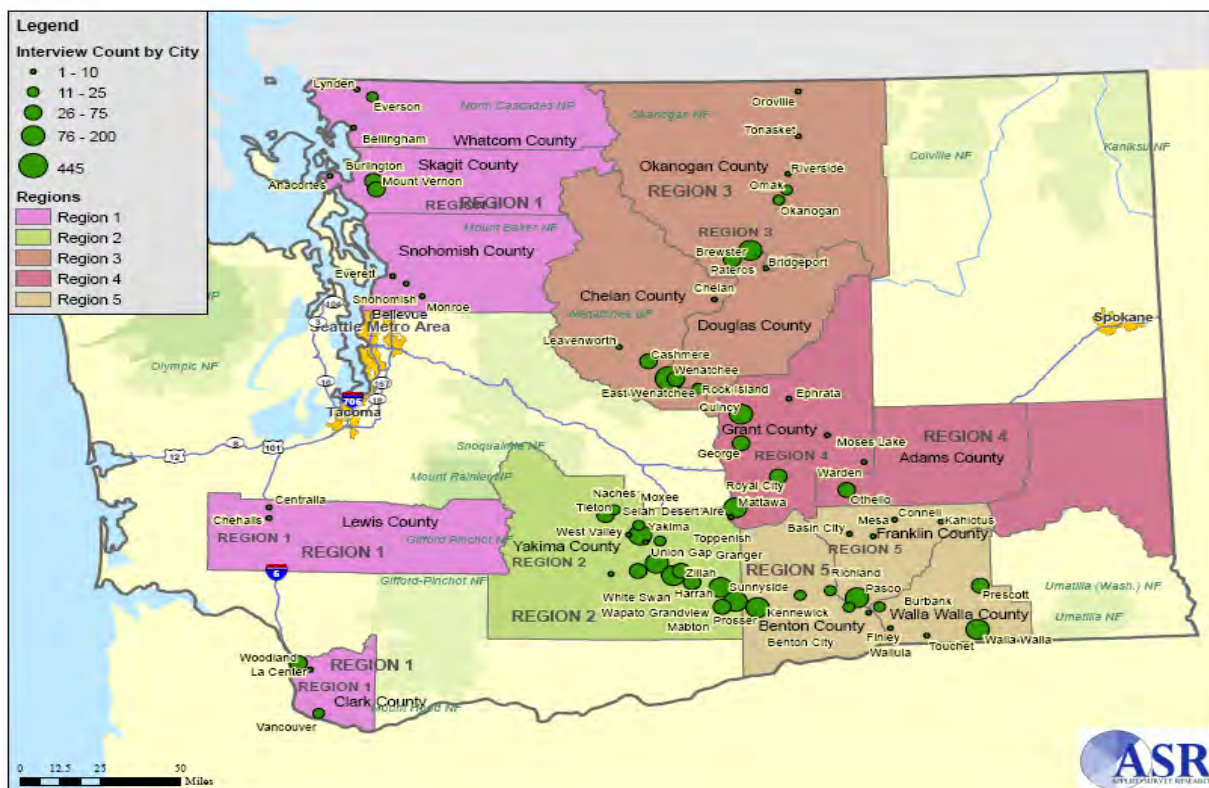


For the purposes of this study, the term “accompanied” is used to refer to individuals listed by the respondent as living in his/her household at the time of survey whom they helped support financially. If the respondent said they live alone or with other people who are unrelated and/or not financially dependent on him/her, they are described as “unaccompanied.”

Figure 3: Crops by Region



Figure 4: Interview Count by Geographic Area



# CHAPTER TWO

## Farmworker Profile



- Household Composition
- Ethnicity
- Language and Literacy
- Permanent Place of Residence
- Local/Non-Local Workers
- Employment
- Income

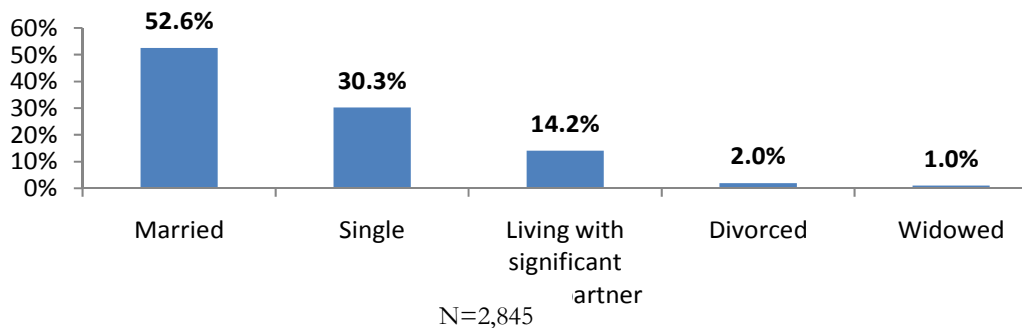
# Farmworker Profile

The composition of the agricultural work force is a key factor in planning farmworker housing initiatives. This chapter provides a profile of the population surveyed by the Trust.

## Household Composition

Seventy-seven percent of those surveyed described themselves as living with family, while 23% described themselves as unaccompanied individuals who were not living with relatives or anyone else with whom they shared finances. Approximately 53% of those surveyed were married, while 30% were single.

Figure 5: What is your marital status?



Fifty-eight percent of those surveyed were living with at least one of their own children in the household; 88% of the households with children were two-parent households. Extended families were relatively common, as were unrelated individuals living in the household. The average accompanied household included 2.6 farmworkers.



Figure 6: Family Relatives Living With You in Washington

	Non-Local		Local		All	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Spouse/Partner	247	50.2%	1098	65.3%	1345	61.9%
Spouse/Partner/Children	191	38.8%	921	54.8%	1112	51.2%
Children	228	46.3%	1037	61.7%	1265	58.2%
Extended Family	187	38.0%	624	37.1%	811	37.3%
Non-relatives	137	27.9%	282	16.8%	419	19.3%
Accompanied Households	492		1682		2174	

Figure 7: Farmworkers Per Household

	Non-Local	Non-Local	All
Average all households	2.07	2.12	2.21
Average accompanied households	2.82	2.50	2.57

One in three respondents reported that they had a spouse/significant other or child who was not living with them while they were working. The majority of spouses and children were in Mexico, and nearly one-third lived elsewhere within Washington State. Many of these respondents bear the expense of maintaining two homes.

Figure 8: Do You Have a Spouse/Significant Other or Children (under age 18) Who Do Not Live With You Here?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	894	31.5%
No	1,945	68.5%
Total	2,839	100.0%



Figure 9: Where Does Your Spouse or Significant Other (not living here) Live?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Washington	141	30.4%
Oregon	5	0.6%
California	102	12.9%
Other US state	4	0.5%
Mexico	436	55.1%
Other Country	4	0.5%
Total	792	100.0%

Figure 10: Where Do Your Children (under the age of 18) Who Don't Live With You Reside?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Washington	456	30.9%
Oregon	7	0.5%
California	133	9.0%
Other US state	15	1.0%
Mexico	856	58.0%
Other Country	9	0.6%
Total	1,476	100.0%

## Ethnicity

Respondents were asked to choose an ethnicity that best describes them. Ninety-five percent (95%) of those surveyed described themselves as “Mexican” or “Mexican American.” Approximately 3% described themselves as “Indigenous Mexican,” while fewer than 2% described themselves as “Central American.”

These results were similar across the five regions, however Region 1 had a notably higher proportion of respondents describing themselves as Indigenous Mexican (23%) and Central American (9%).

Figure 11: Which of the Following Best Describes You?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Mexican/Mexican-American	2699	95.1%
Mexican (Indigenous)	86	3.0%
Central American (e.g. Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua)	47	1.7%
African American	3	0.1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	0.1%
Caucasian	2	0.1%
Total	2,839	100.0%

## Language and Literacy

94% of the participants in the Survey listed Spanish as the primary language spoken in their household, 5% listed indigenous languages and 1% listed English.

Respondents whose primary language was not English were asked about their English reading and writing skills. More than 77% of the respondents stated they could neither read nor write in English. Approximately 15% stated that they could read and write in English, while 6% could read, but not write in English.

Those respondents who indicated that neither Spanish nor English was their primary language were asked about their Spanish reading and writing skills. Over 77% of these respondents stated they had Spanish reading and writing skills. Almost 18%, however, stated they could neither read nor write in Spanish.

Figure 12: What is The Primary Language You Speak At Home?

Response	Frequency	Percent
English	31	1.1%
Spanish	2,672	93.9%
Indigenous languages	142	5.0%
Total	2,845	100.0%

Figure 13: Can You Read and Write in Basic English? (If primary language is not English)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes, read and write	415	14.9%
Read only	165	5.9%
Write only	23	0.8%
Neither read or write	2,191	78.4%
Total	2,794	100.0%

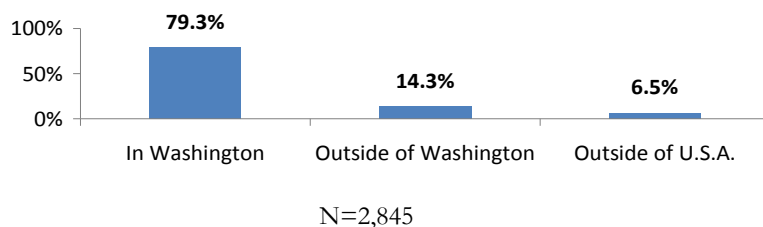
Figure 14: Can You Read and Write in Basic Spanish? (If primary language is not Spanish)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes, read and write	134	77.5%
Read only	5	2.9%
Write only	3	1.7%
Neither read or write	31	17.9%
Total	173	100.0%

## Permanent Place of Residence

Respondents were asked what city, state or country they considered their permanent place of residence. Nearly 80% of the respondents were permanent residents of Washington, while 14% resided in another state within the United States. 94% of those residing in another state lived in California and 3% in Oregon. Nearly 7% considered a country outside of the United States their permanent residence. 99% of these respondents listed Mexico as their home.

Figure 15: Where is Your Permanent Residence?



**Figure 16: Washington Residents: How Long Have You Been Living Within 75 Miles of This Area?**

Years	Frequency	Percent
Less than one year	361	16.0%
One year to less than 5 years	764	33.9%
5 years to less than 10 years	530	23.5%
10 years or more	596	26.5%
Total	2251	100.0%

Figure 16 includes respondents whose primary residence is in Washington whether they travel for work or not. Half of all respondents had lived more than five years within 75 miles of where the interview was conducted in Washington. Figures 16 understate the length of residence in Washington to the extent farmworkers were surveyed away from their primary home in Washington or had moved within the state.

**Figure 17: Where is Your Permanent Residence Outside of Washington?**

Response	Frequency	Percent
California	385	94.8%
Oregon	12	3.0%
Texas	7	1.7%
Florida	1	0.3%
Idaho	1	0.3%
Total	406	100.0%

**Figure 18: Where is Your Permanent Residence Outside of the U.S.A.?**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Mexico	182	99.5%
El Salvador	1	0.6%
Total	183	100.0%

## Local/Non-Local Workers

Thirty percent of the respondents reported that they worked part of the year at locations where they could not return to their primary home each night, while 70% indicated they always work in the same area as their residence. Respondents who live away from home to work in agriculture were asked how much time they spent living away from home for work. Twenty-one percent spent less

than 30 days living away from home, 31% travel for one to three months, 28% travel for three to six months and 19% are away from home from six months to one year.

**Figure 19: During the Last 12 Months, How Much Time Was Spent Living Away From Home in Washington Because You Were Working in Agriculture?**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Less than 30 days	172	21.4%
One month to less than three months	252	31.4%
Three months to less than six months	223	27.8%
Six months to less than nine months	115	14.3%
Nine months to one year	40	5.0%
Total (includes only those who travel)	802	100.0%

## Employment

### Years Working in Washington Agriculture

Sixty-three percent of the respondents reported working in agriculture in Washington for more than five years, with more than one-third saying they have been doing farm work here for over ten years. Nearly one-third of the respondents always work for the same employer(s), while 43% indicated they go wherever they can find work. 11% reported that this is the first time they have worked in Washington agriculture.

**Figure 20: How Long Have You Been Working in Agriculture in Washington?**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Less than 6 months	153	5.4%
Six months up to one year	70	2.5%
More than one year but less than two years	198	7.0%
More than two years but less than five years	634	22.3%
More than five years but less than 10 years	739	26.0%
More than 10 years	1043	36.8%
Total	2837	100.0%

Figure 21: When Working in Washington, Do You Work For the Same Employer(s) Each Year?

	Non-Local		Local		All	
Response	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
This is the first time I've worked in Washington	113	13.6%	185	9.4%	298	10.7
Yes, I always work for the same employer(s)	144	17.3%	736	37.5%	880	31.5
No, I work for different employers each year, depending on where I can find work	462	55.5%	733	37.4%	1195	42.8
Some employers are the same and some are different	113	13.6%	308	15.7%	421	15.1
Total	832	100.0%	1962	100.0%	2794	100.0%

## Future Employment Plans

Respondents were asked how much longer they plan to work in agriculture in Washington. One in four of the respondents planned on working in agriculture for more than ten years, while 11% stated they would stay for more than five years, but less than ten. Nearly 40% of the respondents said that they did not know how much longer they would be working in agriculture, while 8% stated they would stay in agriculture for less than six months. This highlights the challenge of maintain a stable agricultural workforce.

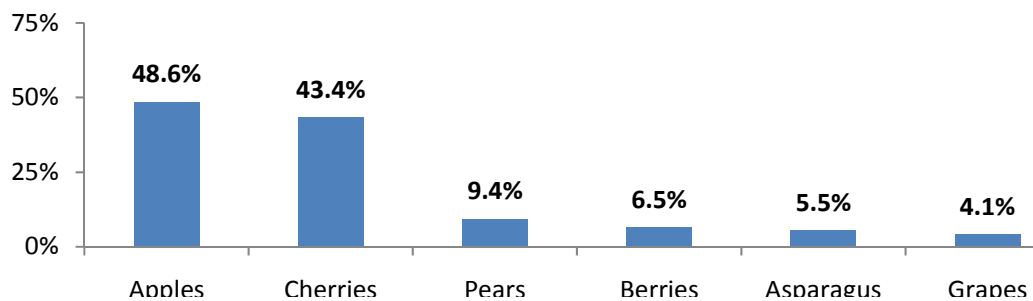
Figure 22: How Much Longer Do You Think You Will Be Working in Agriculture in Washington?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Less than 6 months	229	8.1%
Six months up to one year	43	1.5%
More than one year but less than two years	160	5.6%
More than two years but less than five years	267	9.4%
More than five years but less than 10 years	311	11.0%
More than 10 years	691	24.4%
Don't know	1135	40.0%
Total	2836	100.0%



## Crops and Work Tasks

Figure 23: What Crops Were You Working Within the Last 30 Days? (Top 6 responses).



Multiple response question with 2,837 respondents offering 3,723 responses.

Figure 24: What Crops Were You Working Within the Last 30 Days? (All responses)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Apples	1380	48.6%
Cherries	1231	43.4%
Pears	267	9.4%
Berries	183	6.5%
Asparagus	155	5.5%
Grapes	115	4.1%
Miscellaneous vegetable	84	3.0%
Onions	62	2.2%
Hops	54	1.9%
Peaches & nectarines	48	1.7%
Nursery	38	1.3%
Forestry	31	1.1%
Other agricultural activity	27	1.0%
Potatoes	25	0.9%
Food processing/cannery	13	0.5%
Mint	9	0.3%
Fish/Shellfish	1	0.0%

Nearly half (49%) of all respondents reported they had worked on the state's top cash crop, apples, within the past 30 days. Respondents worked an average of 1.31 crops (non-duplicated).

Respondents were also asked which task they had performed within the last 30 days. On average, survey respondents performed 1.52 jobs such as picking, thinning and pruning crops.

## Income

The average personal income reported by all participants for the preceding year was \$12,327, with fewer than 7% reporting earnings of more than \$20,000 last year. This finding is in the middle of the earnings range reported by the Washington Employment Security Department for workers employed only in agriculture (\$9,124) and those who are also employed in nonagricultural sectors (\$15,313.) Forty-two percent of the respondents reported that they were the sole wage earner in their household. Twenty-six percent reported that there were two wage earners; while more than 17% reported to have three or more members of the household contributing income. The average household income earned last year by those surveyed was \$17,596, about \$3,400 below the federal poverty level for a family of four. Household income varied by region, with households in Region 3 earning just \$12,791 last year, while those in Region 5 earned \$21,425 on average.

Figure 25: Household Income As a Percentage of 2006 Area Median Income

Income	Frequency	Percent		Income	Frequency	Percent
≤ 30% AMI	647	40.9%		Extremely Low Income (≤ 30% AMI)	647	40.9%
> 30% to ≤ 50% AMI	582	36.8%		Very Low Income (0% to 50% AMI)	1229	77.7%
> 50% to ≤ 80% AMI	308	19.5%		Low Income (0% to 80% AMI)	1537	97.2%
> 80% AMI	45	2.8%		N = 1582		
Total	1582	100.0%				

Figure 26: Average Personal & Household Income

Response	Non-Local	Local	All
Average <i>Personal</i> Income	\$10,891	\$12,961	\$12,328
Average <i>Household</i> Income	\$13,553	\$19,369	\$17,596

Figure 27: How Many People Contribute Income (actual dollars) to Your Household?

Response	Frequency	Percent
1	1198	49.4%
2	734	30.3%
3	191	7.9%
4	141	5.8%
5	86	3.5%
6	44	1.8%
7	13	0.5%
8	11	0.4%
9	5	0.2%
12	1	0.0%
Total	2423	100.0%

# CHAPTER THREE

## Housing Issues



- Housing Conditions
- Housing Costs
- Housing Preferences
- The Importance of Housing in Life Decisions
- Homeownership

# Housing Issues

## Housing Conditions

### Overview: Primary Housing Need Indicators

Three primary indicators are conventionally examined in assessing housing need: substandard housing, cost-burden and crowding. The prevalence of these indicators as reported by survey respondents are discussed in more detail later in this chapter and summarized below with the respondents' incomes by household size as a percentage of the 2006 Washington Statewide Area Median Income (AMI). Although the characteristics of the farmworkers surveyed may not be strictly representative of all farmworkers in the state, the prevalence of the primary housing need indicators is similar to the Washington State findings of the national farmworker survey conducted by the Housing Assistance Council (HAC) in 2000.

Figure 28: Household Income As a Percentage of 2006 Area Median Income

Income	Frequency	Percent		Income	Frequency	Percent
≤ 30% AMI	647	40.9%		Extremely Low Income (≤ 30% AMI)	647	40.9%
> 30% to ≤ 50% AMI	582	36.8%		Very Low Income (0% to 50% AMI)	1229	77.7%
> 50% to ≤ 80% AMI	308	19.5%		Low Income (0% to 80% AMI)	1537	97.2%
> 80% AMI	45	2.8%		N = 1582		
Total	1582	100.0%				

Figure 29: Housing Need Indicators

(1) Substandard Housing	Non-Local	Local	All
Homeless (unstructured housing, e.g. car, shed)	15%	2%	6%
Housing Problems	42%	33%	36%
(2) Cost-Burden	Renters	Homeowners	All
Severe cost-burden (>50% of Income)	19%	27%	20%
Cost-Burden (>30% of Income)	42%	63%	44%
(3) Crowding	All		
Crowded housing units (more than 1.01 persons/room)	32%		

## Current Living Situation

Figure 30: Which of the Following Responses Most Accurately Describes Your Living Situation?

Response	N=2803	Non-Local	Local	All
Renting a house, apartment, mobile home		30%	58%	50%
Live in labor camp		37%	12%	19%
Own a house		3%	14%	11%
RV, camper, trailer		8%	7%	8%
Unstructured housing (car, shed, etc.)		15%	2%	6%
Rent a cot/bed/bunk per day		6%	6%	6%
Rent room in motel		1%	0%	1%
Total		100%	100%	100%

Figure 31: Farmworkers Living in Employer Provided Housing

	Non-Local	Local	All
Live in employer provided housing	24%	14%	17%

## Strategies to Find Housing

Those who traveled and sought housing other than their permanent residence were asked how they found their temporary housing. Equal numbers stayed with family or friends, or in employer provided housing (18%). More respondents found housing through family and friends than through their employer. 14% stated that they were unable to find housing and camped out, lived in a car, or a homeless shelter.

Figure 32: When Staying Away From Home Overnight, How Did You Find Housing? (Non-Local Workers Only)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Stayed with family or friends	148	17.6%
Family or friends told me where I could find housing	174	20.7%
Employer provided housing	149	17.8%
Employer told me where I could find housing	126	15.0%
Unable to find housing (e.g. camped out, lived in car, homeless shelter, etc.)	118	14.1%
Local housing or other service agency	68	8.1%
I found housing (hotel, rent a place) by myself	28	3.3%
Newspaper/radio	2	0.2%
Other	17	2.0%

Multiple response question with 821 respondents offering 830 responses.



## Barriers to Finding Housing

Thirty-eight percent of the farmworkers interviewed reported having experienced difficulties in renting housing. Barriers included problems with affordability, availability and discrimination.

**Figure 33: If You Have Had Difficulty Renting Housing In This Area, What Barriers Have Prevented You From Being Able To Rent a Place to Live Here?**

Response	N=991 (includes only those reporting difficulty)	Frequency	Percent
Not having money needed up front (deposit, first or last month rent)		432	43.6 %
No housing available		446	45.0%
Can't find a place you can afford		272	27.4%
Have language barriers		237	23.9%
Landlord requires a lease and I don't need housing for that		177	17.9%
Face discrimination barriers		149	15.0%
Other		24	2.7%
Don't meet requirements		14	1.4%
Too many people		7	1.0%
Not enough places/ bad conditions		7	1.0%
Too expensive		4	0.4%

Multiple response question with 991 respondents offering 1,769 responses.

## Housing Problems

More than one-third (36%) of respondents cited problems with their housing, with an average of 2.3 problems per unit. More non-local workers who travel away from their primary residence for work reported housing problems than did local workers who do not travel. The 2000 Census found only 1.1% of rural Washington housing units lacked complete plumbing, compared to 3.6% of survey respondents. The Housing Assistance Council survey included an inspection of each unit by the surveyor. Through direct inspection, they were able to categorize the housing as 'severely substandard', 'moderately substandard' or 'standard'. HAC found that 30.5% of farmworker units in Washington were severely substandard and another 9.6% were moderately substandard for a total of 40.1% substandard units.

Figure 34: Percent and Average With Housing Problems

Response	Non-Local	Local	All
Have housing problem(s) N=2845	42%	33%	36%
Average number of problems (only respondents with problems) N=1012	2.01	2.44	2.30

Figure 35: Do You Currently Have Any of the Following Problems Where You Are Currently Living:

Response	Percent
Cracking, peeling or chipping paint (lead-based?)	27.2%
Mice	22.8%
Roaches	18.7%
Appliances don't work/no appliances	17.6%
Heating problems/no heating	16.9%
Leaking faucets/plumbing	16.8%
Electrical problems	15.8%
Holes in the wall or floor	15.4%
Draft through windows/holes	12.6%
Poor water quality (can't drink the water)	12.5%
Leaking ceiling	11.5%
Toilet doesn't flush/plumbing doesn't drain	4.5%
Insufficient water supply	3.9%
No plumbing/toilet	3.6%
Waste water/sewage on top of ground	0.8%

## Crowded Housing Units

Thirty-two percent of respondents were estimated to be crowded. The U.S. Census Bureau defines crowded housing units as those with more than 1.01 persons per room, not including hallways or bathrooms. The 2000 Census found 5% of rural housing units in Washington State were overcrowded. The Washington State Farmworker Survey was not able to precisely match the Census definition of crowded units as interviewees were only asked how many formal bedrooms they had.

For the purposes of this study only housing units with bedrooms separate from common areas (e.g. apartments, single family homes, mobile homes) were included. Each unit was assumed to also include a kitchen and common room, but not a formal dining room since most farmworker housing

units do not have formal dining rooms. HAC found in a 2000 national survey of farmworker housing that 58% of farmworker units in Washington were over crowded; motel units were included in the HAC figure, but are not included in the crowding estimate used in this report.

Another indicator of crowding is the number of bedrooms currently occupied and the number respondent needs. Sixty-four percent of respondents need three bedrooms or larger. 34% currently live in that size unit.

**Figure 36: If Your Living Situation is a House, Apartment, Condominium, Triplex, Mobile Home, or Labor Camp With Bedrooms, How Many Formal Bedrooms Are There in This House or Structure?**

Response	Frequency	Percent
1 bedroom	615	25.9%
2 bedrooms	962	40.5%
3 bedrooms	689	29.0%
4 bedrooms	102	4.3%
5 bedrooms	7	0.3%
6 bedrooms	2	0.1%
7 bedrooms	1	0.0%
Total	2,378	100.0%

**Figure 37: How Many Bedrooms Would Be Enough?**

Response	Frequency	Percent
1 bedroom	189	7.5%
2 bedrooms	715	28.4%
3 bedrooms	1122	44.6%
4 bedrooms	448	17.8%
5 bedrooms	35	1.4%
6 bedrooms	6	0.2%
Total	2515	100.0%

## Housing Costs

The federal standard for housing affordability is paying no more than 30% of household income for housing costs including utilities. Households paying more than 30% of their income are defined as cost-burdened. Those paying more than 50% of their income are defined as severely cost-burdened.

Nearly half of all respondents (44%) were cost-burdened. Included in that figure are the 20% of respondents who were severely cost-burdened. Cost-burden was also calculated separately for renters and for homeowners in the table below. HAC's findings for housing cost-burden are available at the regional level; they found 45.8% of farmworkers in the Northwest were cost-burdened. In comparison, the 2000 Census found only 29.3% of rural Washington households suffered cost-burden.

Figure 38: Housing Cost-Burden

	Renters (N=1226)		Homeowners (N=163)		All (N=1389)	
Percent of Household Income Paid for Housing and Utilities	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
More than 30% to 50%	279	22.8%	59	36.2%	338	24.3%
More than 50% (severe cost-burden)	231	18.8%	44	27.0%	275	19.8%
Total Cost-Burden	510	41.6%	103	63.2%	613	44.1%

## Housing Preferences

### On-farm vs. Off-farm Housing

Respondents were asked whether they would prefer to live in on-farm housing or off-farm/in-town housing; 53% of the respondents preferred to live in town, while 39% preferred to live in on-farm housing. 8% did not express a preference. A slightly higher share of non-local workers preferred living on-farm, but more of them still preferred housing in the community.

Of those who preferred to live *on-farm*, almost 84% stated a major reason was proximity to work. Of those who preferred to live *in town*, 67% stated the reason was they wanted to be close to services, schools, churches and the community. Almost 33% of the respondents cited the ability to work wherever they want to, while almost 21% said they preferred the independence of living away from their workplace.

Respondents were also asked whether they would rather rent or own their housing. Those who favored renting split roughly evenly between on-farm or in-town housing and 28% did not state a preference. A smaller proportion of those preferring to rent (29%) want the housing managed by their employer.

**Figure 39: If The Costs to You of On-Farm and Off-Farm/In-Town Housing Were the Same, Which Would You Prefer to Live In?**

	Non-Local		Local		All	
Response	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
On-farm housing	327	43.8%	656	36.6%	983	38.7%
Off-farm/in-town housing	369	49.5%	979	54.6%	1,348	53.1%
No preference expressed	50	6.7%	158	8.9%	208	8.2%
Total	746	100.0%	1,793	100.0%	2,539	100.0%

**Figure 40: Why Would You Prefer to Live in On-Farm Housing?**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Close to work	1067	83.5%
Quiet, peaceful, private	44	3.5%
More secure, more freedom	25	2.0%
Like nature, animals, fresh air, don't like cities	23	1.8%
Work one place, stable work	8	0.6%
Other	2	0.2%

Multiple response question with 983 respondents offering 1,169 responses.

**Figure 41: Why Would You Prefer to Live in Off-Farm/In-Town Housing?**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Close to services, schools, churches, and the community	908	67.4%
Ability to work where I want to	443	32.9%
Independence of living away from my workplace	279	20.7%
Ability to live there year-round	218	16.2%
More secure, more freedom, comfortable	24	1.8%
Safe from pesticides, chemicals	12	0.8%
Expenses(get more money per hour)	4	0.3%
Always problems, don't like it in the camp	2	0.1%
Other	3	0.2%

Multiple response question with 1,348 respondents offering 1,893 responses.

## Renter's Housing Preferences

Respondents were asked to identify whether they would prefer to rent or own their own home, apartment or trailer. Those who favored renting housing were asked where they would prefer to live and who they would like to manage their housing unit. Over 45% of the respondents reported that it didn't matter who managed their housing, and 29% preferred their employer to manage their housing. Fourteen percent preferred a community based housing organization and 11% a private landlord.

Figure 42: If You Would Prefer To Rent Your Housing, Would You Prefer To Live In:

	Non-Local		Local		All	
Response	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Housing not at your place of employment	162	46.4%	83	22.9%	245	34.4%
Live in housing provided at your place of employment	125	35.8%	140	38.6%	265	37.2%
Doesn't matter	62	17.8%	140	38.6%	202	28.4%
Total	349	100.0%	363	100.0%	712	100.0%

Figure 43: Would You Prefer Your Housing To Be Managed By:

	Non-Local		Local		All	
Response	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Private landlord	24	6.8%	58	15.5%	82	11.2%
Your employer	94	26.6%	117	31.2%	211	28.9%
A community based organization	70	19.8%	32	8.5%	102	14.0%
Myself	8	2.3%	2	4.5%	10	1.4%
Doesn't matter	158	44.6%	166	44.3%	324	44.4%
Total	354	100.0%	375	100.0%	729	100.0%

## Factors Affecting the Choice of Housing

When asked to rank thirteen factors affecting the choice of housing in terms of importance, more than 85% of the farmworkers who responded ranked cleanliness, cost, a safe neighborhood, and working appliances as very important, followed by enough bedrooms, a safe place for children to



play nearby, and nearby medical care, each of which was listed as very important by more than 73% of the respondents.

Almost half (49%) of the respondents identified cost as the single most important factor in selecting housing. 14% stated that a safe neighborhood was the most important, while 7% listed location near employment as the most important.

Figure 44: In General, How Important Are The Following When Considering Housing:

Response	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not at all important
a. Is the least costly for me	2530	213	47	19
	88.9%	7.5%	1.6%	0.7%
b. Located on or near the farm or orchard where you are working	1908	506	330	55
	67.1%	17.8%	11.6%	2.0%
c. Located near schools or child care	1813	450	368	144
	63.8%	15.9%	12.9%	5.0%
d. Located near shops and entertainment	1505	599	516	129
	52.9%	21.1%	18.1%	4.5%
e. Located near medical care	2094	444	193	35
	73.6%	15.6%	6.8%	1.2%
f. Located with others from your community	1724	545	401	98
	60.6%	19.2%	14.1%	3.4%
g. Located with others who speak your language	1891	490	316	88
	66.5%	17.3%	11.1%	3.1%
h. Located near your church	1669	619	369	97
	58.7%	21.8%	13.0%	3.4%
i. A safe place for children to play nearby	2202	281	184	93
	77.4%	9.9%	6.5%	3.3%
j. In a safe neighborhood (away from crime, drugs and gangs)	2500	188	58	422
	87.9%	6.6%	2.0%	0.8%
k. Has working appliances like a stove, refrigerator, washer and dryer	2469	251	37	14
	86.8%	8.8%	1.3%	0.5%
l. Is clean	2534	177	33	7
	89.1%	6.2%	1.2%	0.2%
m. Has enough bedrooms	2236	436	73	20
	78.6%	15.3%	2.6%	0.7%

Figure 45: Which One of These is Most Important to You?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Is the least costly for me	1412	50.2%
In a safe neighborhood (away from crime, drugs and gangs)	402	14.3%
Located on or near the farm or orchard where you are work	203	7.2%
Located near medical care	199	7.1%
A safe place for children to play nearby	126	4.5%
Located near schools or child care	123	4.4%
Has enough bedrooms	94	3.3%
Is clean	74	2.6%
Located with others who speak your language	44	1.6%
Has working appliances like a stove, refrigerator, washer	4	1.5%
Located with others from your community	35	1.2%
Located near shops and entertainment	32	1.1%
Located near your church	27	1.0%
Total	2814	100.0%

## Importance of Housing in Life Decisions

There is evidence in the survey results to suggest that improvements in housing could help to attract and retain farmworkers. Approximately 91% of respondents stated they would be more likely to continue working in agriculture if more or better housing were available. Over 93% of non-local workers said the availability of better housing would encourage them to continue coming to Washington to work, and 73% said they would be more likely to stay in Washington permanently.

## Homeownership

Although only 11% of survey respondents owned their homes, the majority (62%) expressed an interest in buying a home of their own. Fifteen percent were actively planning to purchase a home in Washington within the next year, but described a variety of challenges.

Over half of the 348 respondents actively pursuing homeownership struggles with down payment, closing costs, and qualifying for a mortgage. Almost half expressed an interest in credit and homeownership counseling. The importance of pre-purchase and post-purchase counseling is also

indicated by the high incidence of cost-burden among respondents who already own their home (63%). The potential home buyers showed a very strong interest in self-help, with more than 93% stating that they would be interested in helping to build their own home if it would lower the cost.

**Figure 46: When Working in Washington Would You Prefer to Rent or Own Your Own Home, Apartment, or Trailer?**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Rent	770	31.9%
Own	1,497	62.0%
Neither	148	6.1%
Total	2,415	100.0%

**Figure 47: Are You Actively Planning to Purchase Your Own Home in Washington Within the Next 12 Months?**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	348	14.8%
No	1,999	85.2%
Total	2,347	100.0%

**Figure 48: Where are You in The Home Buying Process?**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Still thinking about owning a home	161	46.3%
Saving for a down payment	145	41.7%
Shopping for a loan	38	10.9%
Actively house hunting	37	10.6%
Made an offer on a house/loan in progress	21	6.0%
Other	7	2.0%

Multiple response question with 348 respondents offering 409 responses.

Figure 49: Do You Need Assistance With Any of The Following in Buying Your House?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Credit or debt counseling	166	47.7%
Learning about what affordable housing options are available	151	43.4%
Information on how to purchase a home	137	39.4%
Down payment assistance	124	35.6%
Other things about buying a home	10	2.9%
I don't need assistance	36	10.3%

Multiple response question with 348 respondents offering 624 responses.

Figure 50: What Obstacle(s) Do You Believe Has/Have Prevented You From Being Able To Successfully Purchase a Home?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Not having enough money for a down payment and closing costs	188	54.0%
Not having enough income to make monthly payments/qualify for a home loan	182	52.3%
Lack good enough credit to qualify for a home loan	83	23.9%
Do not understand the home buying process/ Not sure how to get started	150	43.1%
Not being able to afford a home in a neighborhood that you like and can afford	50	14.4%
Face language barriers that prevent you from purchasing a home you want	36	10.3%
Face discrimination barriers that prevent you from buying the home you want	24	6.9%
Other	4	1.1%
I don't feel I face any barriers	18	5.2%

Multiple response question with 349 respondents offering 735 responses.

Figure 51: Would You Be Interested In Helping to Build Your Own Home if it Would Reduce the Cost?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	325	93.4%
No	11	3.2%
Don't know	12	3.4%
Total	348	100.0%