



# Agricultural Employers, Outreach, Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Program, Foreign Labor: H-2A & H-2B

*Agriculture is a critical component of Illinois' overall economic well-being, contributing about \$120.9 billion of total economic output — more than several other Illinois industries, including the financial, transportation and construction industries. Farming provides the base for a variety of agriculture industries, including food processing and the manufacture of farm machinery, chemicals and fertilizer.*

Agricultural Employers have a lot going for them with the new [Work Innovations and Opportunities Act \(WIOA\)](#). The **Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)** provides Wagner-Peyser Act-funded program services to agricultural (Ag) employers and migrant seasonal farm workers (MSFW). Wagner-Peyser Act Services Provided to Ag Employers are:

- Agricultural Recruitment System (Local, Intrastate, Interstate)
- Housing Inspections
- Information and assistance on the Foreign Labor Certification process
- Farm Labor Contractor applications and information
- IllinoisJobLink.com self-serve or staff assisted job orders and recruitment
- Information and Referral to agencies offering programs or services benefiting the business community
- [WOTC Tax Credit Program](#) information and certification of applicants
- Informational Meetings on Unemployment Insurance, Wage/Hour, Migrant Law, Worker's Compensation, [OSHA and Migrant](#) Camp licensing, etc.
- [Labor Market Information](#)
- Hiring Events
- Local offices facilitate conference rooms for recruitment purposes
- Field Checks and Visits
- Participation at New Employee Orientation meetings

A goal for IDES and the [Illinois Migrant Council \(IMC\)](#) is to strengthen employer relationships by increasing employer outreach and targeting Ag employers with hiring employees. Outreach staff will train and encourage the use of the [Agricultural Recruitment System](#) and [IllinoisJobLink.com](#) to recruit and post job openings. In addition, employers will be advised on staff assisted [services offered to employers](#) such as on-site hiring and recruiting events that include local training providers and workforce partners.

IDES will continue to build and maintain relationships with membership organizations such as the [Illinois Farm Bureau](#), [Illinois Legal Aid Foundation](#), [Illinois Department of Human Services](#)

[\(DHS\)](#) and faith-based organizations, and discuss ways to reach Ag employers and inform them of IDES's employer services through IDES' Business Services Team. [Agricultural compliance forms](#), publications, [event presentations](#), [workshops](#) and other communication means and compliance awareness information are available.

[Farm Labor Contractors \(FLC\)](#) who recruit and employ farm workers will be assisted with employer services in compliance with state and federal regulations ([see FLC form](#)). There are 38 FLC's in Illinois known to have recruited and employed farm labor. The Business Services Team works directly with employers and employer organizations, such as local chambers of commerce, to inform employers of IDES employer services and make them aware of compliance rules in posting jobs and supporting the State Monitor Advocate in the humane treatment of employees (see State Monitor Advocate Services below). Additionally, the Business Service Team can assist with registering agricultural employers and entering their staff assisted or self-serve job orders.

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**CHECK OUT THESE SPECIAL PROGRAM LINKS FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION AND FORMS:**

[Migrant & Seasonal Farm Workers](#)

[Foreign Labor Certification](#)

[Foreign Labor Certification Forms](#)

[H-2A Program](#)

[H2-B Program](#)

[Fact Sheets, Posters & Training Materials](#)

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**TO POST A JOB:**

...WITH H-2A or H-2B PROGRAM HIRING SPECIFICATIONS, YOU NEED TO POST IT IN [IllinoisJobLink.com](http://IllinoisJobLink.com) (IJL) TO SATISFY COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL, REGIONAL AND STATE LAWS.

CLICK ON THE ABOVE LINK TO REGISTER IN IJL IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO, OR SIMPLY ENTER YOUR JOB ORDER IF ALREADY REGISTERED. THEN SEND AN E-MAIL TO [rosa.flores@illinois.gov](mailto:rosa.flores@illinois.gov) AND [jay.oconnor@illinois.gov](mailto:jay.oconnor@illinois.gov) ENTITLED H-2A EMPLOYER OR H-2B EMPLOYER WITH:

1. your IJL job order number and IJL User Name,
2. the name and company the job order is filed under,
3. company's location: address, city, and state.

IDES STAFF WILL PROCESS AND ENSURE APPROVAL AND COMPLIANCE.

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### **Illinois State Monitor Advocate Services:**

A full-time State Monitor Advocate (SMA) provides “qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate” to the services provided to other Illinois jobseekers. Essentially MSFWs should receive all workforce development services, benefits and protections on an equitable and non-discriminatory basis, including guidance, testing, job development, training and referral. The SMA:

- Ensures equitable services for farmworkers
- Manages the Employment Service and Employment related Law Complaint System
- Implements and sustains farmworker outreach
- Provides farmworkers notification of available employment services and workers’ rights
- Facilitates the Agricultural Job Order Clearance Process Sustaining the Monitor Advocate System, ensuring services provided are in accordance with WIOA Required State Core Partners for Wagner-Peyser, including the MSFW Program
- Under WIOA, aligns MSFW eligibility criteria and services with the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP)
- Consults with various divisions of the agency to ensure accurate reporting of MSFW data.
- Prepares and implements operating instructions including Policy and Procedures relating to MSFWs
- Prepares for and participates in Federal reviews
- Prepares and updates AOP annually as required
- Identifies statewide opportunities for recruitment of MSFW
- Monitors and reports on the Employment Complaint System, processes MSFW complaints as needed
- Participates at membership organizations, which serve the Ag community
- Maintains communication with Outreach staff and management and addresses issues as they arise
- Serves as Advocate to improve services for MSFWs within the employment service system
- Manages the timeliness of field checks, housing inspections, employer visits and complaint processes
- Meets with farmworker groups and employers to promote the use of Employment Service.
- Conducts field visits to working and living locations of MSFWs.
- Collaborates with WIOA NFJP grantee staff and participates in sponsored events.

*The Illinois State Monitor Advocate is:*

Name: Temporarily Vacant

Location: Springfield, IL

Phone: (217)

E-mail address:

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### *FYI: Illinois Agriculture*

According to the USDA/NASS State Overview, Illinois is currently ranked the #2 state in the nation for:

- Corn for grain
- Soybeans for beans
- Value of Sales by Commodity Group (\$1000): grains, oilseeds, dry beans, dry peas

Illinois is also ranked in the top five states for:

- Market Value of Agriculture Products Sold: Crops, including nursery and greenhouse
- Hogs and Pigs Sold
- Hogs and Pigs Inventory

#### Major Crop Activity:

Seed and Grain companies; hog farms; Pumpkin and horseradish farms are the primary industries for employment needs. Other industries with smaller workforce remain in fruit and vegetable farms. While Illinois is considered a seasonal state, crop activity begins in April and ends in early December.

The University of Illinois Extension Service; *Summary of Illinois Specialty Growers Association* reports the following schedule of crops and seasons for Illinois:

Asparagus (*April to June*)

Strawberries (*Late May to Early June*)

Apricots and Cherries (*June to July*)

Blueberries (*June to August*)

Beans, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cauliflower and Peas (*June to October*)

Fresh Herbs (*June to October*)

Raspberries (*June to November*)

Summer Apples, Blackberries, Peaches, Nectarines (*July to August*)

Beets, Corn, Cucumbers, Pickles & Plums (*July to September*)

Peppers and Tomatoes (*July to October*)

Thorn less Blackberries (*August*)

Grapes, Muskmelons and Watermelons (*August and September*)

Eggplants and Greens (*August and November*)

Turnips (*September to November*)

Fall Winter Apples (*September to November*)

Pumpkins, Squash and Gourds (*November to December*)

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