

AMSSA Migrant Worker Hub Webinar Handout:
**Outreach Strategies for
Migrant Worker Service Providers**



Territorial Acknowledgement

As a provincial umbrella association, AMSSA acknowledges that B.C. is on the unceded homelands of First Nations who have stewarded this land since time immemorial. We recognize the privilege that we have as settlers on this land and acknowledge that AMSSA's operations is on the unceded traditional territories of the x̱m̱əθkwəy̱əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

Thank You

We would like to thank Jessica Juen from Calgary Catholic Immigration Society and Victor Sevilla from Watari Counselling and Support Services Society for their contributions to the content of this handout.



Outreach Strategies for Migrant Worker Service Providers

On February 16, 2022, AMSSA's Migrant Worker Hub held a webinar on this topic with speakers Jessica Juen from Calgary Catholic Immigration Society and Victor Sevilla from Watari Counselling and Support Services Society. Speakers shared with us different types of outreach strategies to migrant worker communities in Canada, including in-person and virtual strategies, best and promising practices for outreach, along with key steps in undertaking outreach to migrant workers communities.

The information presented during the webinar is reflected in this accompanying handout to be used as a learning tool for those working with and supporting migrant worker communities in Canada.

The webinar can be accessed here on the Migrant Worker Hub:

<https://migrantworkerhub.ca/migrant-resource/outreach-strategies-for-migrant-worker-service-providers>

INTRODUCTION

As newcomers to Canada, migrant workers often require support during their stay. Despite their characterization as 'essential' workers in B.C., migrant workers face a plethora of challenges relative to their permanent counterparts. These are largely driven by their geographical and cultural isolation during their time in Canada. Their remote location, the lack of English proficiency, and their inability to change employers can make them vulnerable to discrimination and abuse. Faced with these challenges, migrant service providers must continuously adapt to the workers' circumstances and choose the best course of action to maintain a 'no-harm' approach to ensure their rights are protected. Migrant worker support organizations take on a variety of outreach activities to improve workers' understanding of their rights in the workplace, services available to them, as well as information on how to access health, income and emergency supports when needed.

WHAT IS OUTREACH?

Outreach is any activity that aims to reach out to vulnerable groups who would otherwise not access information or services. The outreach worker is a bridge between the employer, human rights organisations, social services, community members, and the migrant worker.

Objectives of outreach to migrant worker populations includes:

- To serve migrant worker populations as widely as possible.
- To provide support.
- To educate.
- To connect with the community.



REACHING THE TARGET POPULATION

Effective outreach revolves around directly reaching the target population. This entails a clear line of communication with migrant workers, identifying necessities, and creating objectives to address these shortcomings. It is imperative to note that vulnerable workers may be isolated and lack means of transportation and therefore outreach must come to them – not the other way around. Outreach must take on a client-centered approach of meeting migrant workers where they are during the times that best suit their schedules. Weekend visits and outreach at popular locations (grocery stores, markets, etc.) can provide a meaningful point of contact for outreach workers to develop connections.

MAXIMIZING OUTREACH - PRACTICAL STEPS FOR ENGAGING MIGRANT WORKER POPULATIONS

COMMUNITY PROFILE

PLANNING + ORGANIZING

IMPLEMENTATION

MONITORING + EVALUATION



Step 1: What is the community profile?

It is important to identify the key actors in the community which includes migrant workers, existing businesses and facilities, services and resources. For each population, there are key questions to ask when identifying the community profile.

Migrant Worker Population

- Where are migrant workers currently located?
- What part of the community are they settling in?
- What is the migrant worker population in the area?
- Which countries are they coming from?
- What language do they speak?
- What are their challenges?
- How's their level of English?

Existing Businesses

- Who are the employers of migrant workers?
- What types of industries would normally hire migrant workers?
- What are the resources available within the workplace?
- Who can we connect within the company?
- Will the employer be receptive to collaborating?
 - If not, why?
 - Who will be the key contact?

Facilities, Services & Resources

- What are the social service agencies in the community that can also serve as information sources for migrant workers?
- How are they readily accessible by migrant workers?
- Are there cultural resources?
- What is the mode of transportation for migrant workers?



Step 2: Planning and organizing

Engage the Community

To engage the community, it is important to collaborate with a wide variety of community stakeholders. Consultations can be held with community leaders on the ground, mobilize grassroots organizations and connect with community-based organizations who have connections with churches, labor unions and cultural organizations.

Build Partnerships

Established partnerships with support organizations in the region who already work in the community, along with volunteers and established community connectors who can act as the bridge between the migrant workers, the employers and the larger community. It is recommended to include members who have lived experience as migrant workers themselves in partnerships to be able to provide a more holistic level of support.

Action Plan

Once the community has been engaged, available resources have been leveraged and partnerships are in place, an action plan can be created to outline how to accomplish the outreach goals efficiently within a specific timeline.



Step 3: Implementation

The following are suggested examples of activities for implementation of outreach to migrant workers.

Implementation activities will depend on the region and the sector that the migrant workers are working in.

- **Airport Reception** - Welcome migrant workers with care package, provide interpretation, support in understanding required documents in landing, connecting flights, community resources and additional support available depending on the need of the migrant worker.
- **Workplace** - In collaboration with network of employers, use the employers' meeting rooms or parking lots to provide multilingual support services and information.
- **Community Events** - The community events are social, recreational, and educational all at the same time. The purpose is to build connections between established residents and migrant workers, especially those who have recently arrived and have no social connections.
- **Marketing and Advertisement** - Develop standard marketing materials and uniform messaging to maintain consistency and efficiency, delivered through print materials (poster and brochures) and via social media. Ideally multilingual marketing materials are available in the migrant worker languages. This decreases misinformation that may be spread across the community. Online resources, such as an information hub website, can be used as a learning point for migrant workers who are planning to come to Canada or have already arrived.



Step 4: Monitoring & Evaluation

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation is needed to assess the goals of the project. This can be done through the following activities.

- **Meetings** - Regular collaborative meetings can be held with partner organizations, provincial level umbrella organizations and front-line workers to monitor deliverables and outcomes, discuss relevant updates, questions, concerns, and/or

feedback, policy updates, case sharing, challenges encountered, trends, outcomes and share best practices.

- **Evaluations** - Outreach should be continuously evaluated to ensure its quality and effectiveness. Migrant worker satisfaction, process evaluations and regular evaluations are needed. Both migrant workers and outreach workers should be involved in the process to plan for further improvements in implementation, as well as in training and support for the outreach workers.

OUTREACH STRATEGIES - BEST PRACTICES

Contact and Non-Contact Outreach

Ongoing Public Health Orders and restrictions have made it necessary for outreach work to continuously adapt to new challenges. For those providing outreach support services, this may entail distanced-visitations, where donations are dropped-off without making direct contact with migrant workers. This is an effective way to address health concerns, deliver medications, while protecting the wellbeing of migrant and outreach workers alike. However, connecting in person is always the best way to undertake outreach to migrant workers communities. In person connections build relationships and trust with migrant worker communities, which in turn creates the bridge needed for migrant workers to reach out to organizations for support when they need it.



Follow the Worker's Agenda

It is imperative that outreach workers shape their support to address the worker's needs and agenda. This entails providing all the necessary information for workers regarding their rights, responsibilities, and their options. If, for example, a worker is facing discrimination or abuse, they must be informed of all their available courses of action, and what each approach will entail. This requires a careful risk/benefit assessment where the worker is aware of the associated risks and actions will only be taken with the worker's informed consent.

Record-Keeping

Numerous studies have examined the mental health benefits of journaling to focus emotional expression and cognitive processing of a stressful or traumatic event (Ullrich & Lutgendorf, 2002; Negi 2013; Niles et al, 2013). By providing migrant workers with the necessary resources and training, journaling can help them track their physical and mental health, sick days, alleged abuse, or discrimination. By keeping a clear record of one's time in Canada, it may facilitate their ability to report abuse and mitigate the effects of their physical and cultural isolation.

Balancing Perspectives

Effective outreach requires a careful balance of perspectives, ensuring that both migrant workers and employers benefit from their participation. This requires a careful approach to employer relations, outreach should principally benefit the worker, without neglecting the employer's perspective and needs. When undertaking outreach, it is imperative to avoid creating any tension between workers and employers through clear communication with all parties involved.

To facilitate outreach and referrals, please refer to AMSSA's Migrant Worker Hub BC Service Map:

<https://www.amssa.org/resources/services-map/>

The **Migrant Worker Hub** is a digital centre of resources and tools to enhance the knowledge and capacity of individuals, employers, unions, professional associations and other organizations supporting migrant workers in British Columbia.

To access all the resources available visit: <https://migrantworkerhub.ca/>

Questions? Send us an email to migrantworkerhub@amssa.org