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Farmworkers on the Delmarva Peninsula HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Client

National Council on Agricultural Life and Labor Research Fund, Inc. located on Salisbury Road in Dover, DE. NCALL's jurisdiction includes all of Delmarva.

Project Description

The demand side of this assignment was designed to estimate the number and characteristics of migrant and seasonal farmworkers employed on the Delmarva Peninsula. The supply side of the assignment involved a quantification of permanent assisted rental housing that could be considered suitable for farmworkers, including USDA, HUD and tax credit units. NCALL received a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to commission this study.

Challenges

One of the challenges of this assignment involved determining the number of home-based (working year-round or seasonally) versus the number of farmworkers who normally migrate into Delmarva for limited periods of time. Most forms of assisted housing require tenants to be permanent legal residents of the United States. Visiting farmworkers must therefore be privately housed. Without surveys and interviews, it is difficult to measure the adequacy of private housing for farmworkers.

Solution

Normally, we utilize housing information from the Bureau of the Census and housing agencies (HUD, USDA, etc.) to perform a needs assessment. In this instance, however, M&L approached this assignment through agricultural sources including the Department of Labor's National Agricultural Workers survey, USDA Census of Agriculture and state data relative to farm licensing. Phase II of this assignment is expected to include surveys of growers and farmworker service providers.

Benefits

NCALL used the research accumulated as part of this report to provide technical assistance to non-profit housing development corporations that develop housing for farmworkers on the Delmarva Peninsula. Organizations such as Delmarva Rural Ministries utilize this information to identify target locations for new farmworker housing.

Planning and Development Consultants