



Meeting Minutes: Governor's Committee on the Safety, Health, and Wellbeing of Agricultural and Food Processing Workers

DATE: 3/13/2023

MINUTES PREPARED BY: CINTHIA MARTINEZ

Attendance

Committee Members

Present

Elise Sporre, Project Manager and Outreach Coordinator, Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services

Erik Zabel, Epidemiologist Principal, Minnesota Department of Health

Jessica Grosz, Director of Labor Standards and Apprenticeship, Minnesota Department of Labor, and Industry

Lorrie Janatopoulos, CareerForce Director, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Patrice Bailey, Assistant Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Rodolfo Gutierrez, Executive Director, HACER

Tamara Nelsen, Executive Director, Minnesota AgriGrowth Council

Absent

Dan Glessing, President, Minnesota Farm Bureau

Emilia Gonzalez Avalos, Executive Director, Unidos MN

Gary Wertish, President, Minnesota Farmers Union

Jim Gleb, President, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1189

Kiza Olson, CHS Administrator, Meeker-McLeod-Sibley Community Health Services

Rena Wong, Director of Organizing, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 663

Sarah Berry, Public Health Director, Waseca County | CHS Administrator, Le Sueur – Waseca Community Health Board

Stephanie Low, Interim Executive Director/ Chief Medical Officer, Community Health Service Inc.

Staff Present: Cinthia Martinez, CareerForce Office Coordinator, Minnesota Department of

Employment and Economic Development; Valerie Gamble, State Program Admin Principal, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Guests present: Adriana Campbell, Health Program Rep, Minnesota Department of Health; Christine Young, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc; Hana Bibliowicz, Health Program Coordinator, HACER; Janie Sandoval, Migrant Labor Rep, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development; John Stiffin, Department of Labor & Industry; Lidibette Guzman, State Monitor Advocate, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development; Lisa Snyder, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development; Marleen Lundberg, Area Manager, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development; Noemi Trevino, Migrant Education, Minnesota Department of Education; Siv Dobrovolny, Department of Labor & Industry.

Agenda

- 1:00 PM **Welcome / Introductions**
- 1:10 PM **Approve Minutes & Agenda**
- 1:11 PM **Legislative Updates**
- 1:15PM **Housing subcommittee updates**
- 1:25 PM **Public Comments**
- 1:30 PM **Adjourn**

Welcome/ Introductions

Jessica Grosz is now the new DLI representative taking Nicole Blissenbach's previous role in this committee.

DEED's Lorrie Janatopoulos will be retiring on April 11, 2023, Deputy Commissioner Marc Majors will be taking over her duties.

Approve minutes

Approved.

Legislative Updates

Under DEED's prevue, recommendations included codifying this committee in statute and creating the office of Ombudsperson. Among those two, we will not proceed with the office of ombudsperson. As well, the codification of this committee did not pass into statute and was not included in the supplemental budget. This does not mean that it isn't a priority, it just means that it will be discussed during the next legislative session. Despite not moving forward with those initiatives this year, we look forward to them next year.

As far as DLI is concerned, earlier in the session, house files 70 and house senate files 61, relating to fair labor standards for agriculture and food processing workers, passed through the Labor and Judiciary Committees, and are now going to the Finance Committee of the Senate and House Committee on Ways and Means. There are no dates set for the hearings in those committees.

Housing subcommittee update

The housing complaint jurisdiction piece will be for when an agricultural worker might need help submitting a housing complaint if they come into contact with someone. This draft will be presented to the committee leaders later this month, and any necessary adjustments will be made after. In the May 8 meeting, the housing workgroup will present this version to the rest of the committee. There will also be more worker-facing materials created so they get the message that everyone has rights when it comes to housing and where to go if they have problems. For worker-facing information, we would provide AWP.

The group has been in contact with community action agencies and state agencies regarding possible solutions to the challenge of preserving and increasing affordable housing. The agencies include Three Rivers, Greater Minnesota Housing Fund, Minnesota Workforce Housing, and attending the Minnesota housing forum.

Through these meetings, we have learned about opportunities to improve and increase affordable housing. The group was also made aware that the state community action agencies are required to explain their grant application on how they serve migrant and seasonal farm workers. There is a knowledge gap there, but there are hopes of conducting a training with agency leaders within MNCAP (Minnesota community action partnership) to discuss the issues impacting MSFW.

The group will present in April as part of a cultural competency committee funded event with Minnesota housing finance agency. Presentation will focus on legal issues and services for agricultural workers, as well as collaboration and its impact.

If there are other committee members that are interested in being part of this workgroup, please reach out.

Public Comments

None.

Adjourn