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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OF AGRICULTURE WORKERS IN THE SAN LUIS VALLEY, CO

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Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Department of Health and Human Services.

»» Prepared by:
Nicholas Stoll
Katherine A. James



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INTRODUCTION

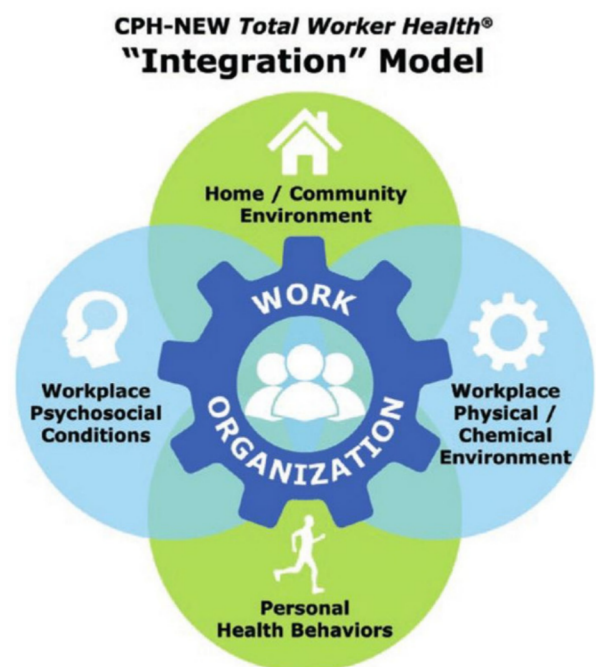
When local leaders raised concern about a behavioral health crisis within the San Luis Valley (SLV), faculty at the Center for Health, Work & Environment consulted with residents to identify ways researchers could support the community. As climate change continues to impact the environment and human health, residents cited concern for friends and family who rely on the agriculture industry for their livelihood. With local leaders and industry experts providing guidance, our team used a *Total Worker Health®* approach to survey local Ag workers and organizations. Our goal was to assess the state of behavioral health and provide additional support and intervention for the community.

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), *Total Worker Health* includes policies, programs, and practices that integrate protection from work-related safety and health hazards with the promotion of injury and illness prevention efforts to advance worker well-being.

This report contains preliminary results from survey data and may vary from future publications in academic journals.



www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/wellbq/default.html



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SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Over the course of 9 months, we recruited 221 agriculture workers to take part in our survey. Of these participants, 53 identified as owners/operators and 168 identified as field workers. Overall, we saw a mean completion rate of 81%.

Note: Participants were not required to answer every question on the survey.



Sex —
58% female
40% male



Race/Ethnicity —
79% Hispanic/Latino
4% Indigenous
27% White



Age —
23% 18-29
27% 30-44
24% 45-64
13% 65+



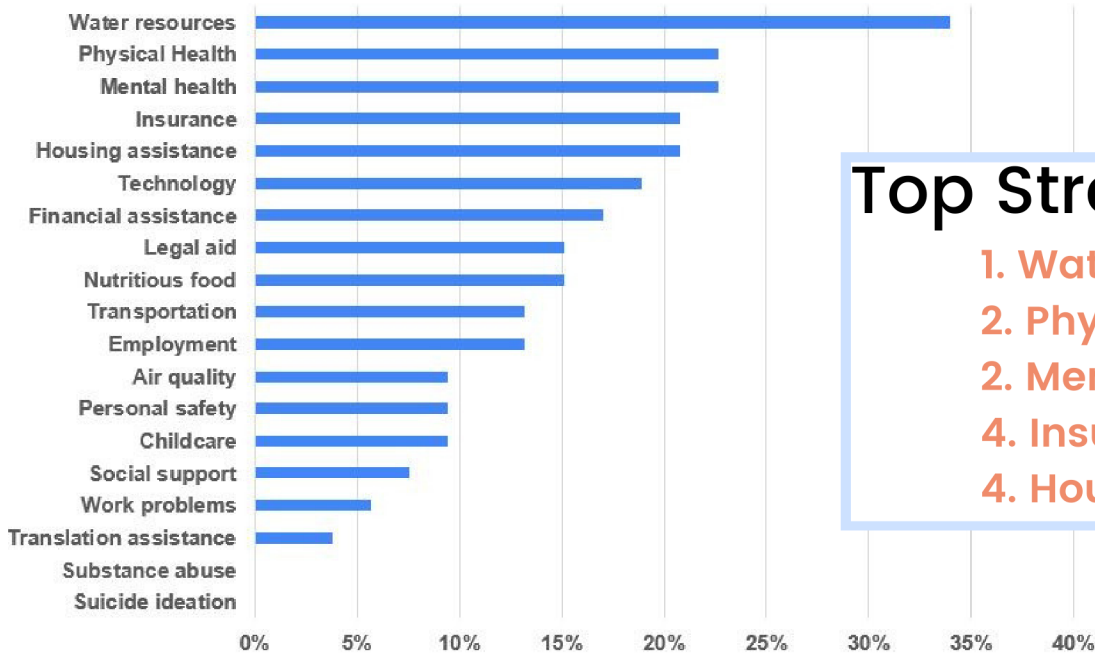
Education level —
23% Less than high school
31% High school/GED
15% Some college
14% Bachelor degree or higher



Size of social support network —
mean - **3**
median - **2**

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

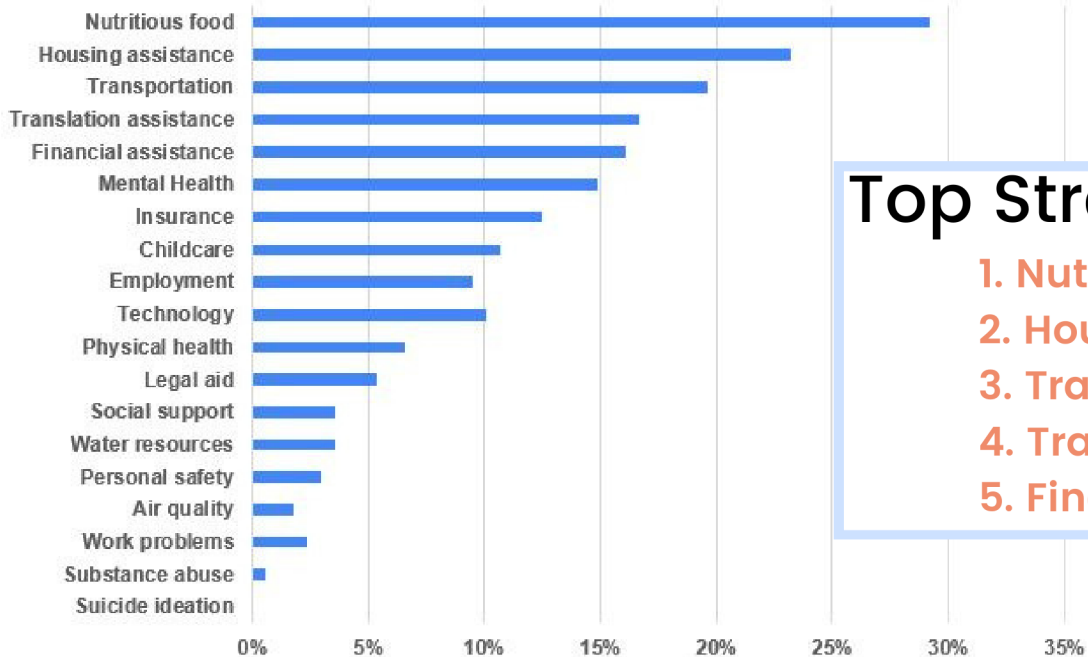
Owners/Operators



Top Stressors

1. Water resources
2. Physical Health
2. Mental health
4. Insurance
4. Housing Assistance

Field Workers



Top Stressors

1. Nutritious food
2. Housing assistance
3. Transportation
4. Translation assistance
5. Financial assistance

AG WORKER SURVEY

Meaningful work

n = 221

This is a measure created from two different prompts:

"The work I do is meaningful to me."

"The work I do serves a greater purpose."

Score range: 1 (low) - 4 (high)

Mean: **2.8**

Median: **3**

Positive work affect

n = 185

This is a measure created from several different prompts asking about feeling enthusiastic, energetic, content, and at-ease while working.

Score range: 1 (low) - 7 (high)

Mean: **5**

Median: **6**

Negative work affect

n = 176

This is a measure created from several different prompts asking about feeling anxious, angry, gloomy, and discouraged while working.

Score range: 1 (low) - 7 (high)

Mean: **3**

Median: **3**

Work fatigue

n = 186

"How often do you experience fatigue when you are working?"

11% Never **12%** Almost never **16%** Rarely **28%** Sometimes **13%** Often **13%** Very often **5%** Always

Workplace discrimination

n = 156

"I feel discriminated against in my job."

This is a measure created from three different prompts asking about discrimination based on age, race, and gender.

Score range: 1 (low) - 4 (high)

Mean: **1.5**

Median: **1**

Overall health

n = 188

"Would you say that in general, your health is poor, fair, good, very good, or excellent?"

2% Poor **33%** Fair **55%** Good **21%** Very Good **10%** Excellent

Chronic Health Conditions

n = 182

The sum of chronic health conditions reported by participants. The survey asked about health status for arthritis, musculoskeletal disorders, asthma, lung disease, cancer, depression, diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure.

67% of participants had at least one chronic health condition **45%** of participants had two or more chronic health conditions **13%** of participants had three or more chronic health conditions

Insomnia

n = 180

"Have you ever had chronic insomnia?"

71% Never **19%** In the past **10%** Current

Overall Stress

n = 176

An aggregate score for stress based on stress from health, finances, social relationships, and work.

Score range: 1 (low) - 7 (high) Mean: **2.9** Median: **3**

Stress from health

n = 171

34% Never **14%** Almost never **16%** Rarely **19%** Sometimes **10%** Often **5%** Very often **2%** Always

Stress from finances

n = 173

28% Never **11%** Almost never **11%** Rarely **24%** Sometimes **14%** Often **7%** Very often **6%** Always

Stress from family or social relationships

n = 172

37% Never **13%** Almost never **14%** Rarely **17%** Sometimes **8%** Often **6%** Very often **4%** Always

Stress from work

n = 169

38% Never **12%** Almost never **12%** Rarely **20%** Sometimes **8%** Often **7%** Very often **4%** Always

General Anxiety Disorder Scores

n = 173

This measure was created from scores of anxiety as assessed by the GAD-7.

83% Minimal anxiety **21%** Mild anxiety **9%** Moderate anxiety **6%** Severe anxiety

Poor mental health

n = 173

An aggregate score created from questions asking about specific symptoms of depression and anxiety a participant may experience.

Score range: 1 (low) - 4 (high) Mean: **1.5** Median: **1**

Tobacco use

n = 182

"Do you use any of the following products? Cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes

73% Never **11%** Not anymore **9%** Some days **7%** Daily

Cannabis use

n = 184

Do you use any of the following marijuana products? Pre-rolled blunts/joints, edibles, electronic vaporizers

85% Never **6%** Not anymore **6%** Some days **3%** Daily

Alcohol consumption

n = 67

"How many drinks of alcoholic beverages do you have in a typical week? (One drink - one beer, glass of wine, shot of liquor, or mixed drink)"

Range: **0-30** Mean: **4** Median: **2**

Risky drinking

n = 181

During the past year, how often have you had more than four drinks if you are male, or more than three drinks if you are female, in a single day?

35% of survey respondents engaged
in risky drinking behavior

Work-related injuries

n = 175

“During the past 12 months, did you experience any work-related injuries?”

90% of participants experienced work-related injuries **58%** of injuries required first aid, change in job activities, or lost time from work

Sleepy at work

n = 176

In the past 7 days, how often have you felt sleepy while at work?

18% Never **34%** Rarely **39%** Sometimes **9%** Usually **1%** Always

Financial insecurity

n = 188

An aggregate variable based on two questions:

“How worried are you right now about not being able to maintain the standard of living you enjoy?”

“How worried are you right now about not having enough income to pay your normal monthly bills?”

Score range: 1 (low) - 4 (high) Mean: **2.4** Median: **2.5**

Life satisfaction

n = 185

“In general, how satisfied are you with your life?”

2% Not at all satisfied **6%** Not too satisfied **41%** Somewhat satisfied **51%** Very satisfied

Social support outside of work

n = 188

How often do you get the social and emotional support you need from friends, family, or others outside or work ?

13% Never **20%** Rarely **45%** Sometimes **21%** Always

Activities that participants engage-in include:

Volunteering

n = 44

Training/education courses

n = 45

Socializing with friends/family

n = 111

Caregiving activities

n = 50

Sporting, cultural, or leisure activities

n = 61

Relaxation/planned solitary activities

n = 67

Home maintenance

n = 128

ORGANIZATION SURVEY

A capacity survey was also circulated to local organizations that provide services that might support the health of agriculture workers.

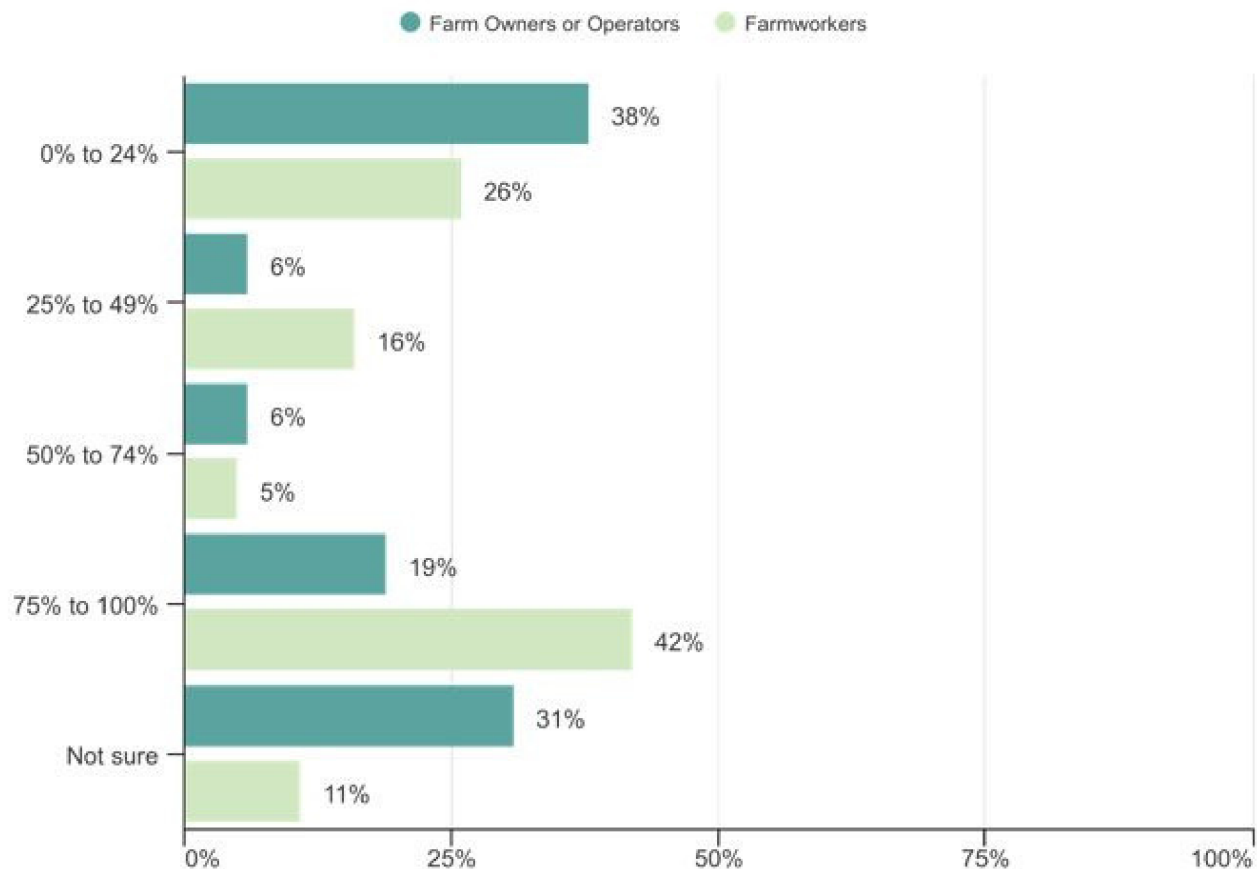
Service Population



Overall, the service population of the respondents surveyed consists of more farm workers than farm owners or operators. Specifically, 38% of the Q2 respondents reported that farm owners or operators represent less than a quarter of their service population, whereas 42% of the Q3 respondents reported that farmworkers represent at least 75% of their service population.

Q2: What percentage of your organization's service population consists of farm owners or operators?
Q3: What percentage of your organization's service population consists of farmworkers? Farmworkers are individuals who actively engage in operations for crop or livestock farms.

n = 16 and 19 respondents reported for Q2 and Q3, respectively



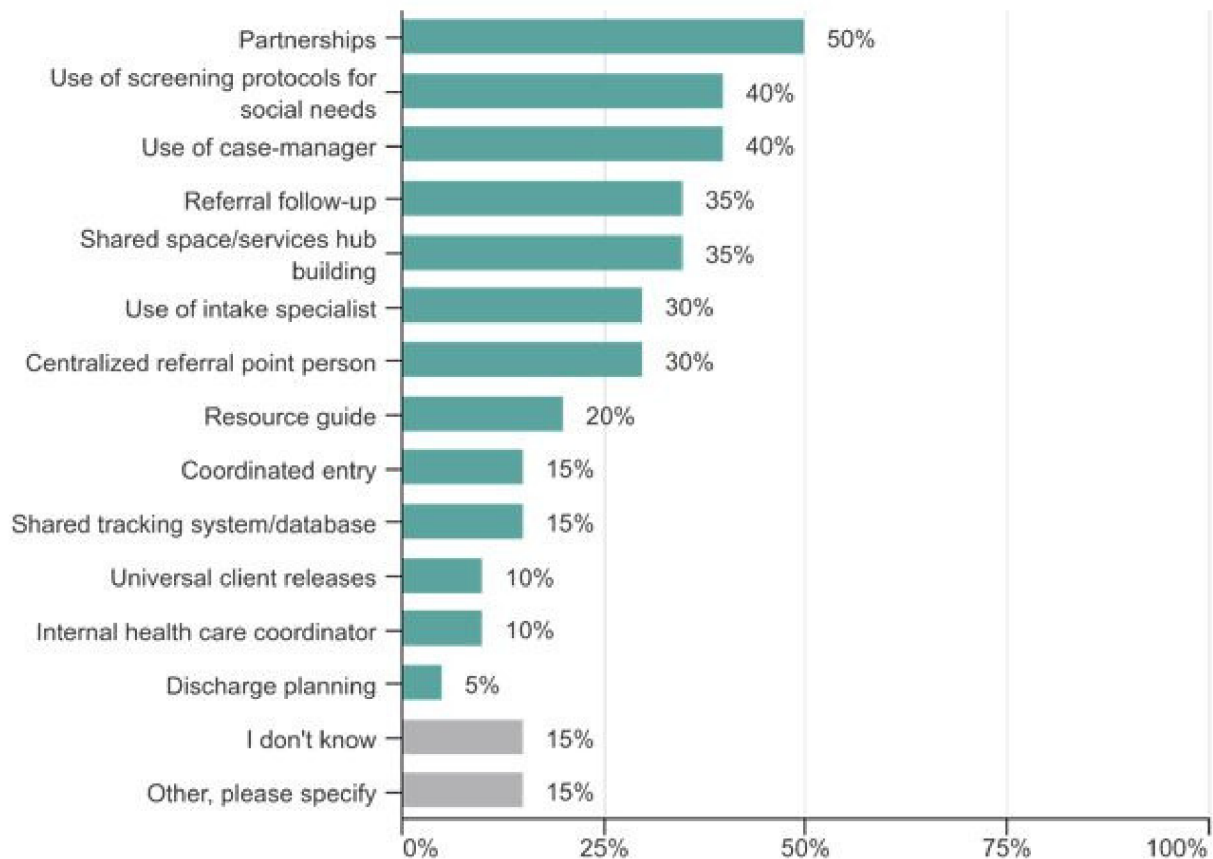
Referral Processes



The aspects of the referral processes that are working well include partnerships (50%), the use of screening protocols for social needs (40%), and the use of case-manager (40%). Meanwhile, discharge planning (5%), internal health coordinator (10%), and universal client releases (10%) are aspects that present potential opportunities for improvement.

Q4: Think about referral processes in the SLV for farmers and farmworkers who need support services.
What aspects of these referral processes are working well? (Select all that apply)

n = 20 respondents reported for this question



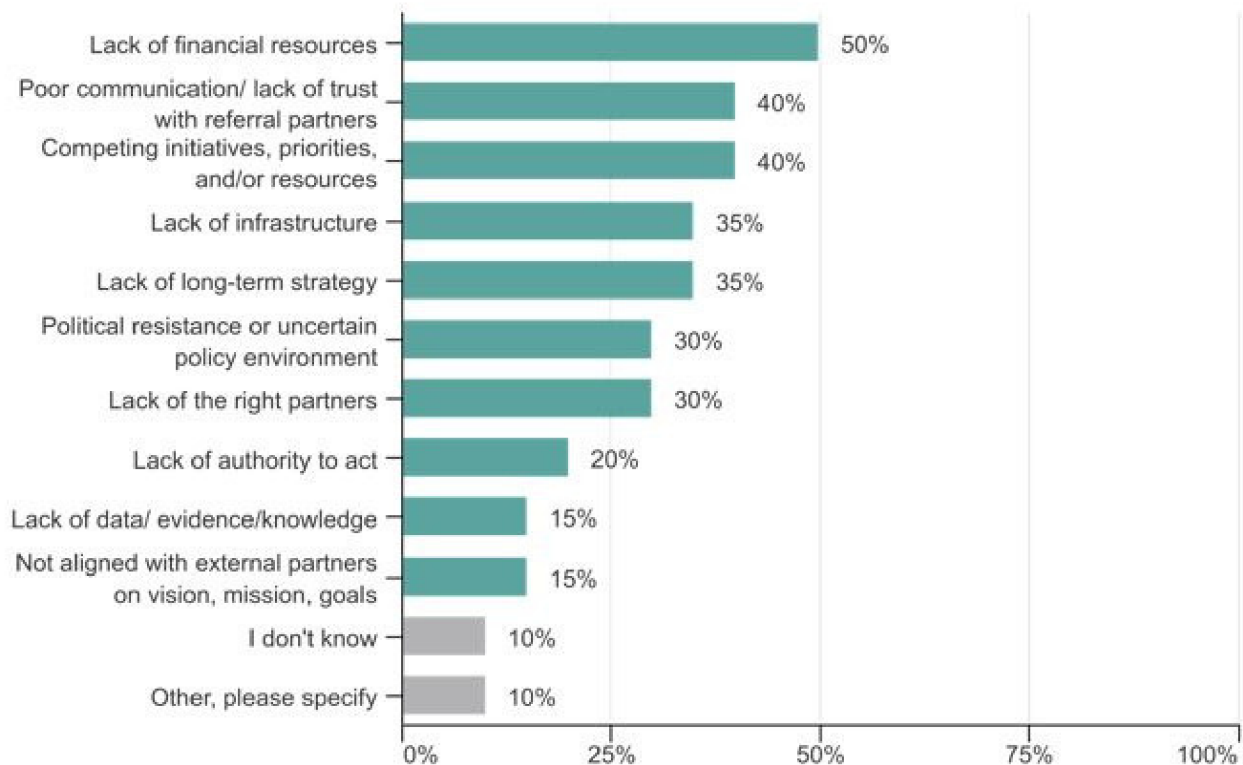
Barriers and Challenges



Lack of financial resources (50%), poor communication/lack of trust with referral partners (40%), and competing initiatives, priorities and/or resources (40%) are the most commonly identified barriers or challenges that currently hinder referring and serving farmers and farmworkers in the SLV.

Q5: What are barriers or challenges that currently hinder referring and serving farmers and farmworkers in the SLV? (Select all that apply)

n = 20 respondents reported for this question



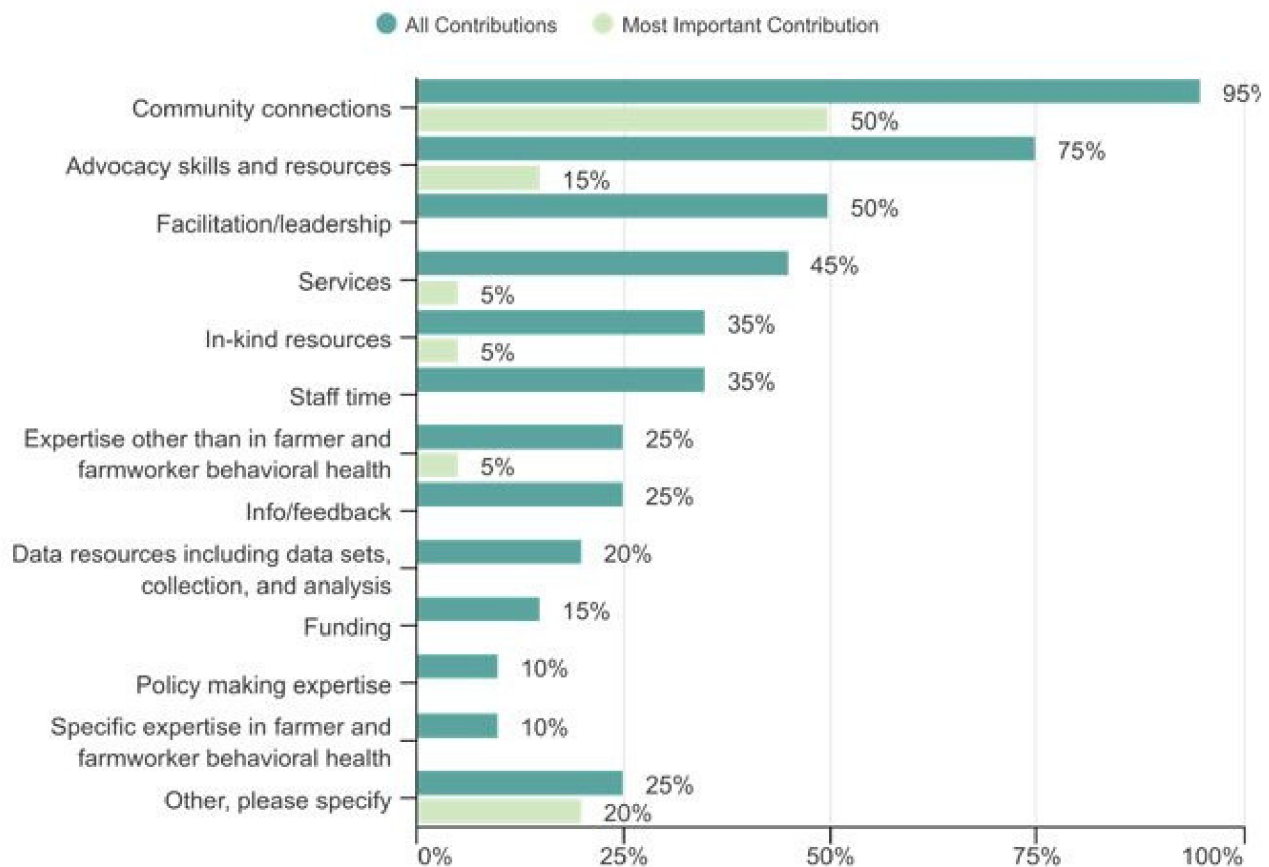
Resource Contributions



Resources that at least half of the respondents contribute include community connections (95%), advocacy skills and resources (75%), and facilitation/leadership (50%). Notably, 50% of respondents identified community connections as their most important contribution. Meanwhile, there are fewer respondents reportedly contributing funding (15%), policy-making expertise (10%), and specific expertise in farmers' and farmworkers' behavioral health (10%).

Q6: Leveraging resources can be a key function of professional networks. Please indicate what your organization contributes, or can potentially contribute, to the network of service providers for farmers and farm workers in the SLV (select all that apply).

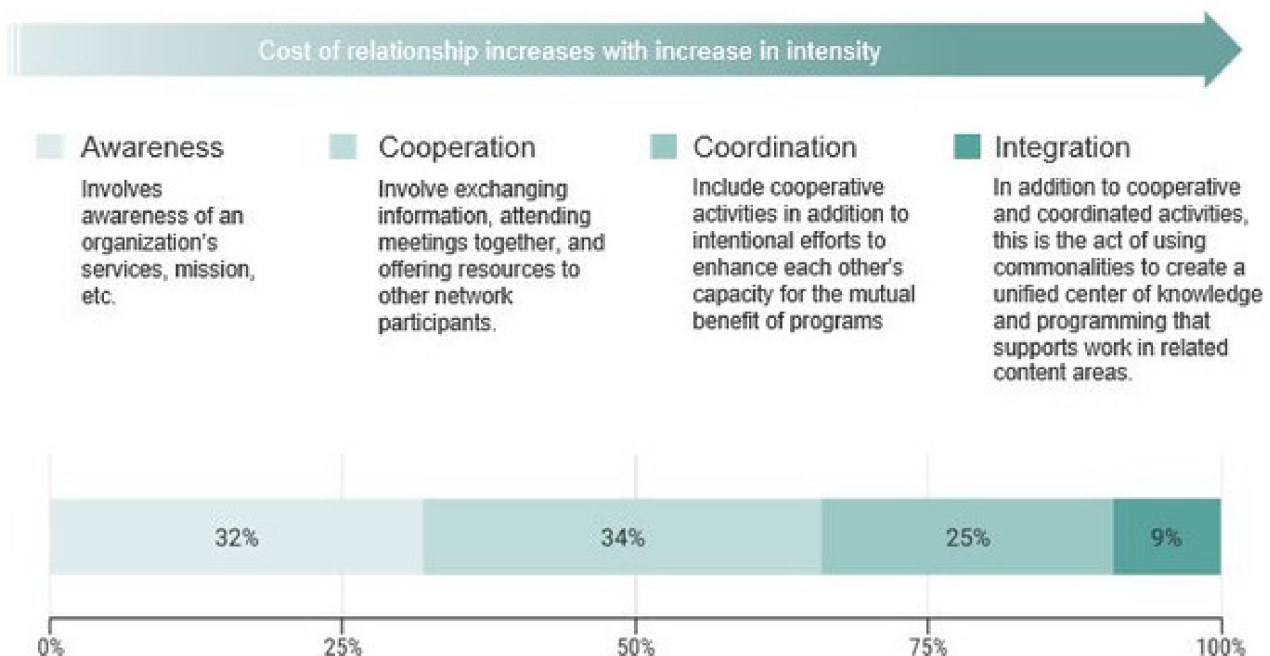
n = 20 respondents reported for this question



Intensity of Relationships

Network relationships were assessed according to their level of intensity. This is important, because more connections and greater intensity of connections do not necessarily result in a thriving and sustainable network. While the appeal to create a more diverse network is strong, organizations are equally challenged with the reality that they have limited relationship budgets – that is, limited resources to build and manage diverse networks. We know that networks have advantages, but there is a limit on how many relationships we can manage before we lose the collaborative advantage altogether. And while it is our intuition that more network connections should indicate a better functioning network, this approach can be endlessly resource intensive.

Q9: What kinds of activities does your relationship with this organization entail?
n = 284 relationships reported for this question



It is a positive result that connections are somewhat distributed across the levels, with **most relationships categorized as cooperative or integrated**. If a majority of relationships involved awareness only, that would indicate that the network is not fully leveraging its collaborative advantage. A **majority of relationships are at the integrated level** which does require a greater number of resources to maintain, and the network might not be sustainable over time.

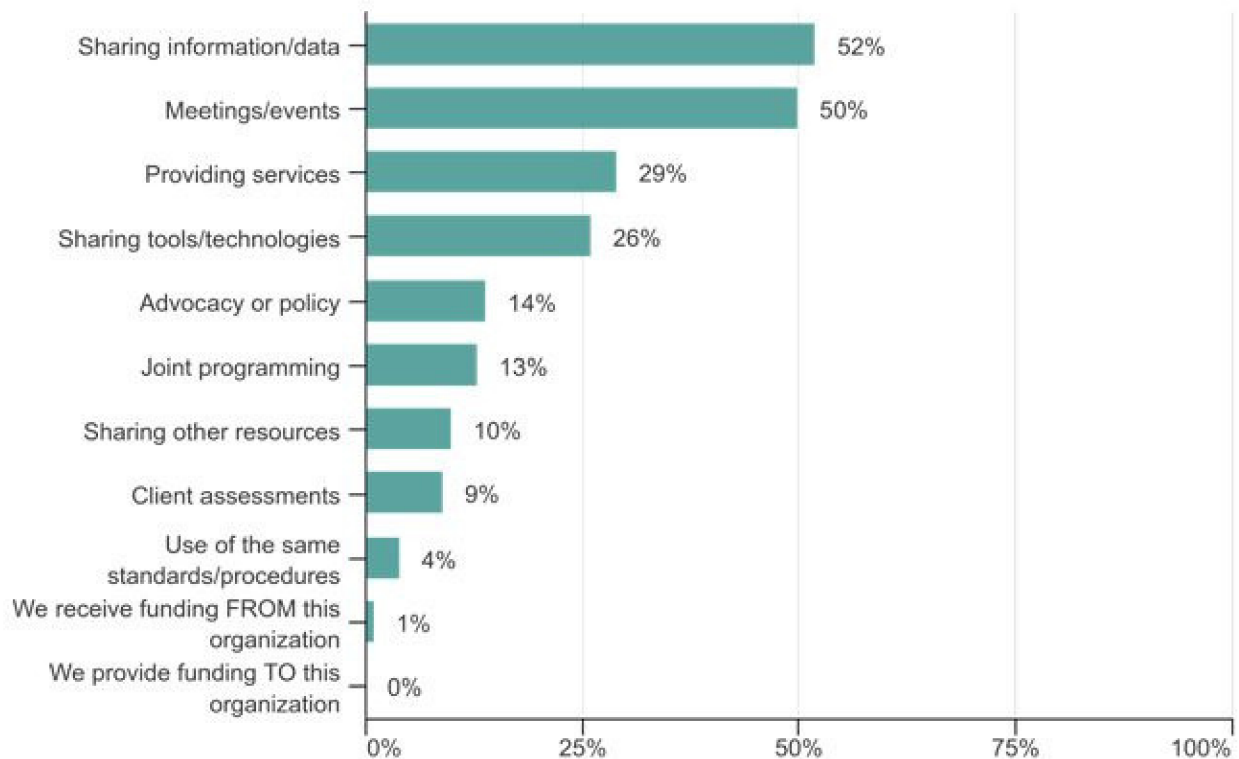
Shared Activities



Sharing information/data (52%), meetings/events (50%), and providing services (29%) are the most reported relational activities in the network. In comparison, there are fewer relationships reportedly engaging in using the same standards/procedures and receiving or providing funding to each other.

Q10: What activities do your relationships with this organization include?(Select all that apply)

n = 242 relationships reported for this question



Frequency of Referrals

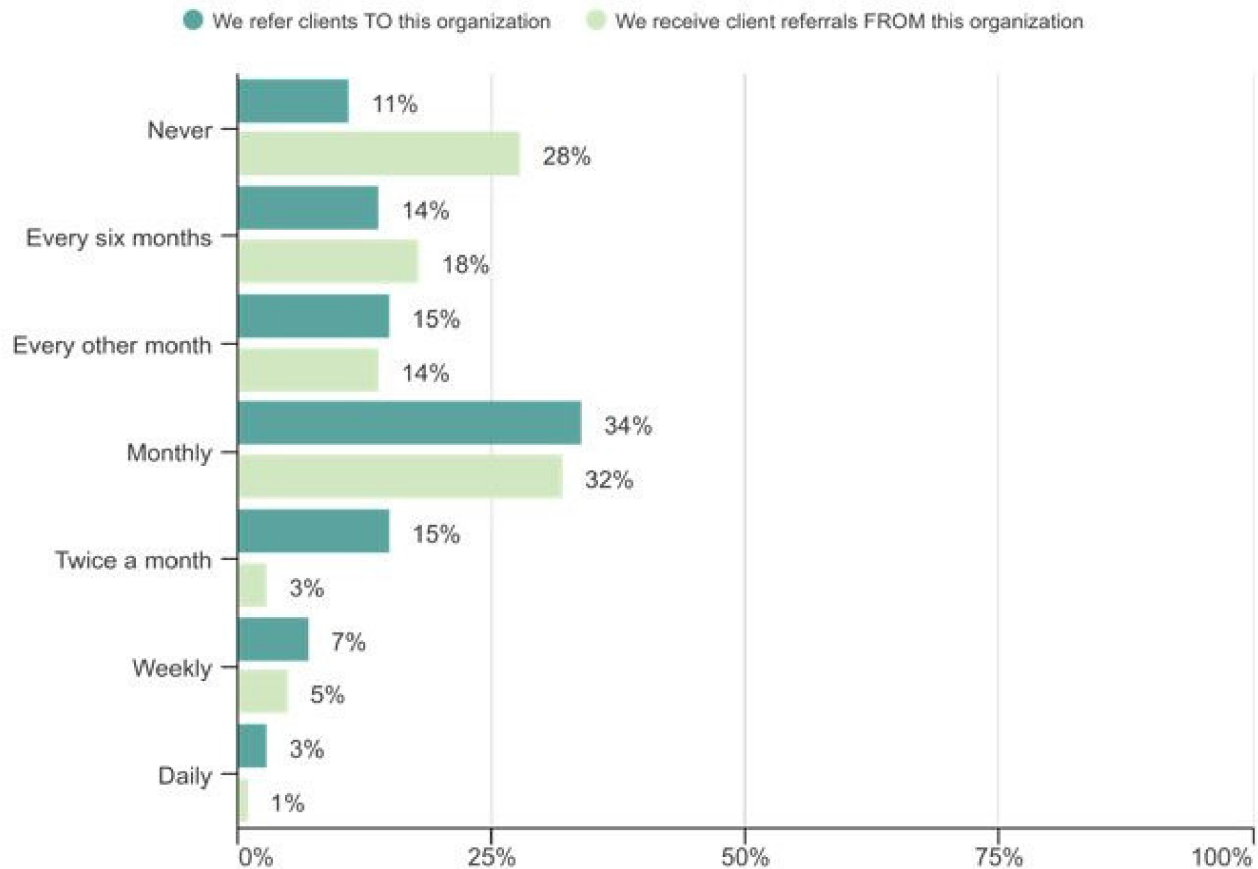


Respondents reported they refer clients to 34% of their partners on a monthly basis. Similarly, they receive client referrals from 32% of their partners on a monthly basis.

Q11: Approximately how frequently does your organization refer clients TO this organization?

Q12: Approximately how frequently does your organization receive client referrals FROM this organization?

n = 249 and 203 relationships reported for Q11 and Q12, respectively



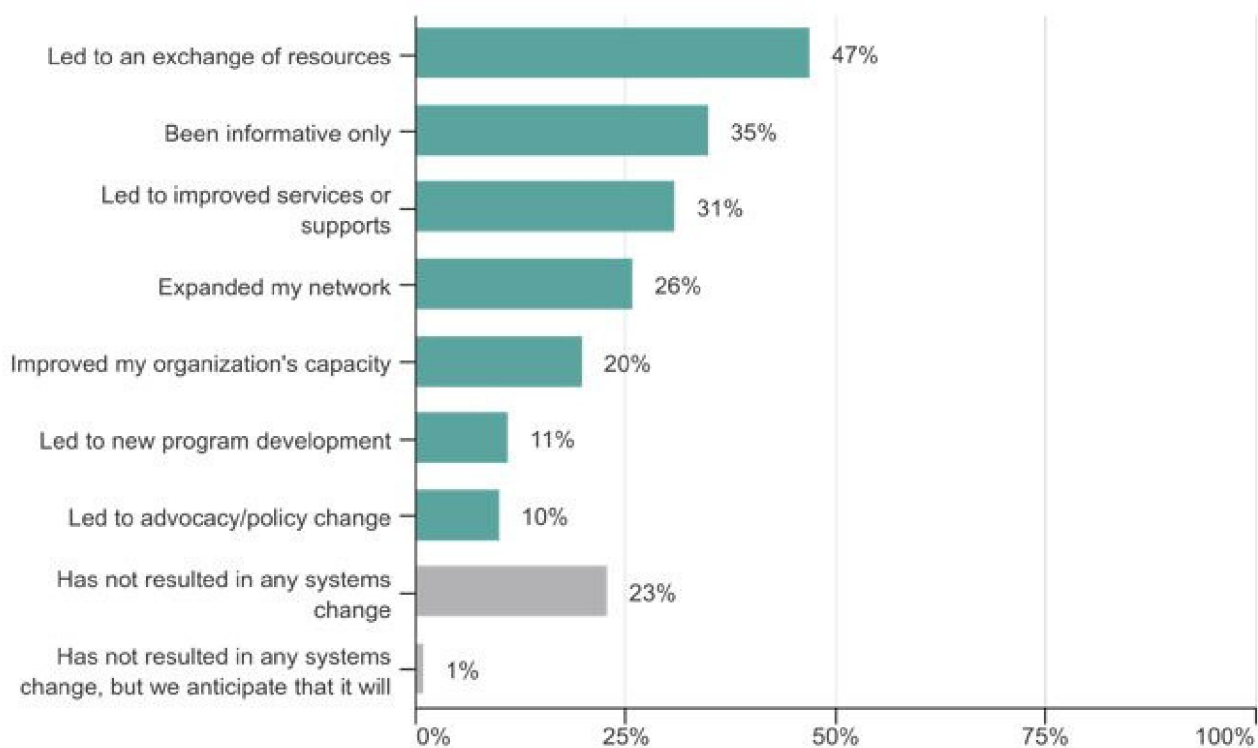
Relational Outcomes



About 47% of relationships have led to an exchange of resources. Respondents also found that their relationships have been informative (35%) or have led to improved services or supports (31%).

Q13: This partnership has: (select all that apply)

n = 213 relationships reported for this question



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thanks to all members of our community advisory board, participants, community connectors, local leaders, and others who have supported this work. This is just one of many needed steps that must be taken to support the behavioral health of agriculture workers in the San Luis Valley.

Feel free to reach out if you have any questions about this process or the data that was collected. As we move forward with this work, we also welcome the opportunity to collaborate with organizations and individuals with a vested interest in local behavioral health.

***We thank you for your continued support
in our efforts on worker health.***



Contact

Katherine A. James

Center for Health, Work & Environment

Colorado School of Public Health

Kathy.James@cuanschutz.edu

Office: (303) 724-8169

AgriStress HELPLINESM

for Colorado

 **833.897.2474**
call or text

A 24/7 CRISIS RESPONSE LIFELINE SERVING
COLORADO RESIDENTS VIA CALL AND TEXT

Launched Dec. 1, 2023



A Lifeline for Agricultural Communities

Not only does the agriculture industry have some of the highest rates of fatalities and injuries across all age groups, but also some of the **highest rates of suicide**.

Work and life in agricultural communities bring about **unique stressors and situations**, which increase barriers to accessing care. This is why they need professionals who understand their particular issues.

VIA LINK, the crisis call center for the AgriStress Helpline, is accredited by the **American Association of Suicidology** (AAS) and the **Alliance of Information and Referral Systems** (AIRS).

The crisis support specialists who answer the line are all certified in **FarmResponse**[®], a continuing education course which provides the full range of competencies necessary for serving farmers, ranchers, fishers, foresters, and loggers. All specialists have over 300 hours of evidence-based training in crisis support and de-escalation.



The AgriStress HelplineSM

Suicide Lifeline First, Resource Line Second

While there are a handful of agricultural resource and referral lines out there, this is the only crisis support line currently dedicated to agricultural, forestry, and fishing communities.

Accessible and Affordable

The AgriStress Helpline is available 24/7/365, toll-free via call and text. Phone calls have interpretation available in 160 languages, and text message services are available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. All calls are answered within 30 seconds, with an average answer rate of around 18 seconds.

Quality Care

There is no limit to how many times someone may call the line, nor is there a limit on call duration. All callers receive care that is specific to their needs - whether that is a risk assessment, emergency services, emotional support, or connection to resources. Everyone is also offered a 24-hour follow-up call.



AgriStress HELPLINESM

for Colorado



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Scan **this QR code** and save the
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