

Assembly Bill No. 941

Passed the Assembly September 9, 2021

Chief Clerk of the Assembly

Passed the Senate September 8, 2021

Secretary of the Senate

This bill was received by the Governor this _____ day
of _____, 2021, at _____ o'clock ____M.

Private Secretary of the Governor

CHAPTER _____

An act to add Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 12710) to Part 2 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code, relating to farmworkers.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AB 941, Bennett. Farmworker assistance: resource centers.

Existing law establishes the Department of Community Services and Development within the California Health and Human Services Agency to supplement and coordinate public and private sector efforts to assist low-income participants, including homeless individuals and families, migrants, and the elderly poor, to secure and retain meaningful employment, attain an adequate education, make better use of available income, and obtain and maintain adequate housing and a suitable living environment.

Existing law, the California Community Services Block Grant Program, requires the department to administer the federal Community Services Block Grant funds to provide financial assistance for activities designed to have a measurable and potentially major impact on causes of poverty in a community or areas of a community where poverty is a particularly acute problem.

Existing law authorizes this funding to assist programs that, among other things, meet the needs of migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families, such as daycare for children and elderly persons, education, health services, improved housing and sanitation, legal advice and representation, and consumer training and counseling, and assistance in processing applications for legalization and citizenship.

This bill, upon appropriation by the Legislature, would require the department to establish a grant program for counties to establish farmworker resource centers that provide farmworkers and their families information and access to services related to, among other things, labor and employment rights, education, housing, immigration, and health and human services. The bill would make a county’s eligibility for funding under the grant program contingent upon the county working with local or statewide community-based organizations to develop the center, providing

25% of the center’s funding under the program, and requiring the center to provide services in at least English and Spanish, to provide an assessment of the population the center would serve, and to maintain a cost-effective database to track the number and type of calls received, referrals made, and claims filed, and to monitor local trends. The bill would require the department to convene and facilitate a workgroup to help inform the establishment and administration of the grant program, as specified.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 12710) is added to Part 2 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code, to read:

CHAPTER 8. FARMWORKER RESOURCE CENTER GRANT PROGRAM

12710. In enacting this chapter, the Legislature finds and declares:

(a) Agriculture is both a major industry and employer in California.

(b) Farmworkers are an essential component of a successful and sustainable agricultural industry.

(c) There are approximately 420,000 farmworkers in California.

(d) It is important for California to address the challenges faced by farmworkers and the agricultural industry.

(e) California has long been an agricultural model for modern agriculture, adapting to meet 21st century challenges and needs with broadly shared benefits for consumers, agricultural employers, and workers.

12711. For purposes of this chapter, the following definitions apply:

(a) “Center” means a farmworker resource center.

(b) “Department” means the Department of Community Services and Development.

(c) “Program” means the grant program established and administered by the department pursuant to this chapter.

12712. (a) Upon appropriation by the Legislature, the department shall establish and administer a grant program for eligible counties to establish and fund farmworker resource centers

that provide information and access to services described in subdivision (b) to farmworkers and their families.

(b) Services provided at a center may include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) Assistance in filing with all state or local agencies that serve farmworkers, including in filing paperwork with state or local agencies, if deemed appropriate by the county.

(2) Referrals to organizations, including legislative offices and community-based organizations.

(3) Providing resources and answering questions regarding programs related to labor and employment rights, education, housing, utilities, immigration, and health and human services, including, but not limited to, food security, mental health, and childcare assistance.

(c) A center may provide services to farmworkers at a brick and mortar location that is in an area accessible to the farmworker community being served in the county or through a mobile center to conduct outreach where farmworkers live and work.

12713. To be eligible for funding under the program a county shall do all of the following:

(a) Work with local or statewide community-based organizations in order to develop the center.

(b) Provide 25 percent of the center's program funding under this chapter.

(c) Require the center to provide services in at least English and Spanish. Centers funded through the program are encouraged to provide services in additional languages as requested by the relevant community-based organizations.

(d) Require the center to provide an assessment of the population the center would serve, including, but not limited to, an assessment of languages other than English or Spanish that would be accommodated by the center.

(e) Require the center to maintain a cost-effective database to track the number and type of calls received, referrals made, and claims filed, and to monitor local trends.

12714. (a) To help inform the establishment and administration of the program, the department shall convene and facilitate a workgroup that includes, but is not limited to, the following representatives:

- (1) A nonmanagement representative from an existing farmworker resource center.
 - (2) Three representatives from community-based organizations with a history of serving the farmworker communities.
 - (3) A representative from a community-based organization that works with indigenous farmworkers.
 - (4) A representative from the Labor and Workforce Development Agency.
 - (5) A representative from a local public health department.
 - (6) A representative from the County Welfare Directors Association of California.
 - (7) A representative from the farming community.
- (b) The working group and the department shall do both of the following:
- (1) Develop common indicators and metrics for the evaluation of grant applications.
 - (2) Develop standards and metrics for the evaluation of awardees for the purpose of ensuring that awardees use grant funds pursuant to this chapter.
- (c) The department shall do all of the following:
- (1) Determine and approve awardees based on the metrics and indicators established pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (b).
 - (2) Ensure that initial grants are awarded to counties in different regions of the state.
 - (3) Using the standards and metrics established pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (b), evaluate awardees within 18 months after an awardee has established a center.

Approved _____, 2021

Governor