**21E APPROACH FOR FARMWORKER HOUSING**

Prepared March 11, 2022

At the February 21 Elements meeting, Ada Chan from ABAG presented on ABAG’s Farmworker Housing Toolkit (<http://www.21elements.com/workforce-housing>) with guidance originating from HCD comments on SoCal housing elements. Since then, several jurisdictions have expressed worries about what will be expected of them. This memo is meant to suggest a baseline approach for most of the county’s jurisdictions, most of which do not have a significant number of farmworkers.

ABAG’s Toolkit suggests that where the analysis shows a limited number of farmworkers living within the community:

* *Integrate farmworkers into general affordable housing plan throughout Housing Element by including farmworkers in the list of special need populations to be accommodated.*
* *Partner with County & Planning Collaborative for outreach.*
  + Note: If the first San Mateo County jurisdiction to submit its housing element gets a comment from HCD that additional farmworker outreach is needed, 21 Elements will coordinate a countywide outreach effort.

As a result, we recommend the following:

1. All Jurisdictions:
   1. **Do not dismiss the countywide need.** Make sure your Housing Needs section acknowledges the need to house the region’s farmworkers.

Each jurisdiction’s Housing Needs Data Report from ABAG already includes a few data points on Farmworkers, covering the number of migrant worker students in the locality (282 in the entire county in 2019-2020 school year), permanent farmworkers (978 in the county in 2017) and seasonal farmworkers (343 in the county in 2017). Note all these numbers have been trending downward.

* 1. You may want to copy, edit and insert some form of this paragraph into your Housing Needs section:

*Farmworkers in \_\_\_ are actually more similar to very low or extremely low income households than traditional migrant workers. This is because today’s farmworkers are more settled and typically live in one location, rather than following the crops. Per the USDA, today’s farmworkers can commute up to 75 miles to the workplace. They are also more likely to have families and are looking for schools, employment for a spouse/partner and a location to live in that provides a community. Because of this, they will benefit from the existing affordable housing programs in \_\_\_. Expand on what you are doing for affordable housing and language outreach. Additionally, \_\_\_’s participation in Doorway will ensure that new affordable housing listings are publicized in Spanish and that vacancy searches are mobile-friendly.*

1. Specific Jurisdictions: There are two exceptions that may need additional analysis.
   1. Some cities with landscape workers may want to do additional analysis looking at their needs.
   2. Half Moon Bay and/or the Unicorporated San Mateo County may want to consider more specific policies and programs.

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FOR REFERENCE

**From Santa Monica's Housing Needs section:**

*Santa Monica includes in its population individuals from each of these “special needs” groups with the exception of farm workers. Santa Monica is highly urbanized and does not support an agricultural industry. Therefore, there is no housing need for farm workers.*

**From HCD's response letter:**

***Farmworkers:*** *The element states (page B-33) Santa Monica does not support the agriculture industry and there is no need for farmworkers. Farmworkers from the broader area and those employed seasonally may have housing needs. As a result, the element should at least acknowledge the housing needs of permanent and seasonal farmworkers at a county-level (e.g., USDA county-level farmworker data) and include programs as appropriate.*

**From Santa Monica's (Revised) Constraints section (currently under review and not yet certified):**

***d. Farmworker Housing*** *While Santa Monica is highly urbanized and does not have any agricultural industries, according to the 2017 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Census, there were 1,035 farms with 1,793 total producers within Los Angeles County. Additionally, the California Employment Development Department estimated that the 2020 annual average of agricultural employment was between 1,501 and 5,000 within the County. Therefore, within the region there is a need for farmworker housing, whether that be permanent or seasonal. In order to accommodate this need, Santa Monica provides a variety of housing types, such as employee housing and group residential, that are further discussed in this appendix that would be able to accommodate housing needs for these workers.*