



# Migrant Health Taskforce Evaluation of 2023 Initiatives





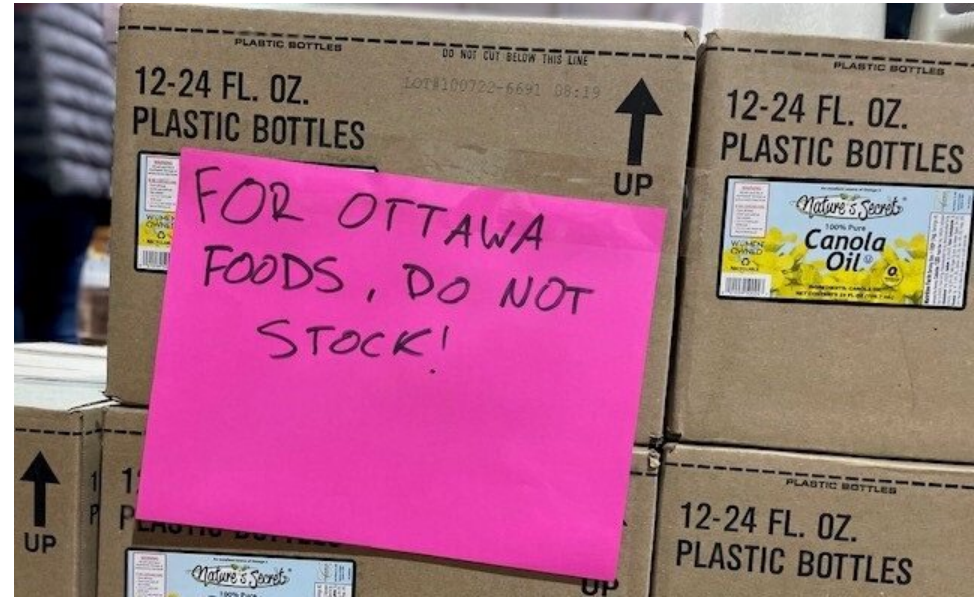
## Background & 2023 Evaluation Report Overview

### Background

The Ottawa County Department of Public Health (OCDPH) received a 3-year grant from the Office of Minority Health to survey the migrant farmworker community in Ottawa County and get a better understanding of health inequalities and disparities. After receiving this funding, the OCDPH worked with agencies and organizations in the county to form a Migrant Health Taskforce to help guide the process.

During the first year of the grant, the taskforce reviewed existing data about the migrant farmworker population and contracted with Dr. Martin Hill, PhD, of VIP Research and Evaluation, to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment. Needs assessment data was collected from 319 migrant farmworkers in 18 different health-related areas. The taskforce then embarked on a strategic planning process with facilitation assistance from the Ottawa County Department of Strategic Impact. The strategic planning process involved a review of the needs assessment data, prioritizing areas to focus efforts, and creating an action plan of strategies to begin working on during the second and third years of the grant.

During the second year of the grant, the Migrant Health Taskforce and OCDPH collaborated on several initiatives that include providing welcome baskets, resource guides, Together in Grand Haven, fresh produce through the veggie van, TEFAP distribution, dental services, sports equipment, micro pantries, Boys & Girls Club transportation, and improved countywide collaboration. An overview and evaluation of these initiatives can be found in the Evaluation of 2022 Initiatives report.



### 2023 Evaluation Report

During 2023, the Migrant Health Taskforce and OCDPH collaborated on several initiatives to improve the health of Ottawa County's migrant farmworkers. This report is organized by initiative, with each section including an overview of the initiative, how the initiative ties to the strategic plan, evaluation data and feedback about the initiative from the Migrant Health Taskforce and OCDPH, and suggestions for 2024 and beyond.

The Migrant Health Taskforce and OCDPH encountered some challenges this summer that impacted both program initiatives and this evaluation. Like previous years, migrant farmworkers typically work long hours. And in many instances, they are ready to return home and spend time with family members rather than spend time giving feedback or having conversations with volunteers and staff. OCDPH and DSI will continue to explore ways to increase survey engagement and data collection. A lack of volunteers also contributed to a reduced capacity for data collection and surveying.



## Welcome Bags & Resource Guides

### Overview of Initiative

The Migrant Health Taskforce and OCDPH partnered with Ottawa Food and Community Action House to once again create and distribute welcome bags for migrant farmworkers and their families. The bags included an Ottawa County Community Resource Guide with information relevant to migrant farmworkers in both English and Spanish, a food resource guide, and household staples including paper towels, storage containers, toilet paper, laundry soap, bar soap, dish soap, a laundry bag, and shampoo. The group worked with area growers to place the bags in housing units where migrant farmworkers resided during the summer months. Extra resource guides were also printed and available in other locations throughout the county. In 2023, 800 bags and 7,000 guides were distributed—a significant increase from the 360 baskets and 1,500 guides distributed in 2022.

**800**

bags distributed

**7,000**

resource guides distributed

### How does this initiative tie to the strategic plan?



Provide services that account for migrant farmworkers' **lack of time, work schedule, and conflicting hours with service providers**



Coordinate **events to engage** and **connect migrant farmworkers** with the community



Work on solutions that address the **cost of healthcare services** and **fruit/vegetable access**



Improve **centralization** of **reference materials** for migrant farmworkers



## Welcome Bags & Resource Guides

### 2023 Evaluation

Migrant farmworkers who received welcome bags and resource guides were asked to provide feedback about the helpfulness of the bags and the resource guides. DHHS staff also shared feedback they received from migrant farmworkers.

**83%** of participants rated the welcome bags a **5 out of 5**, meaning they were “**very useful**” to their families.

**80%** of participants rated the resource guide a **5 out of 5**, meaning they were “**very useful**” to their families.

The remaining participants rated both the bag and the resource guide a 3 out of 5, meaning “somewhat useful.”

#### Comments from participants:

“Thank you very much for the bag, it was very useful.”

“Thank you very much for the products, and they are all very useful.”

“Thank you very much for all your help. Everything that came in the bag is very useful. Thank you.”

“Thank you very much for the initiative to help families.”

**100%** of participants said they used all of the items provided in the welcome bags.

When asked if there was anything else that they would prefer to have included in the welcome bags, one participant asked for toothpaste to be included.

### Migrant Health Taskforce and OCDPH Feedback

Feedback from the Migrant Health Taskforce and OCDPH staff indicated that the distribution of the welcome bags in 2023 was well organized and the resources guides were helpful. The taskforce also said that staff and volunteers did a good job of making sure what was included in the welcome bags matched what individuals wanted and used.

The taskforce indicated that they wanted to continue with this initiative in the future. However, future years will require some sort of outside funding. MHT members also suggested some cost-saving measures for the future including converting the resource guide to a smaller postcard-sized document or utilizing QR codes.

### Suggestions for 2024

- Consider funding for future years from grants and local businesses and churches
- Ensure that the resource guides remain up to date and current
- Continue collaborating with growers and with migrant farmworkers to ensure that the food and goods provided are relevant and that distribution is effective

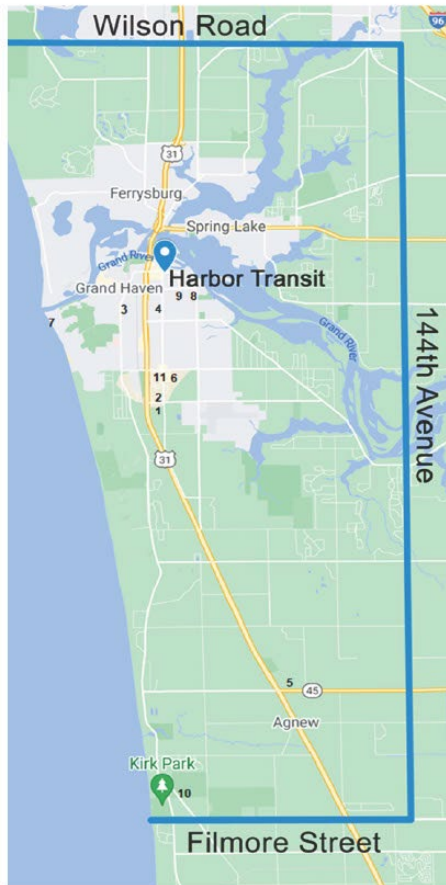


## Harbor Transit Maps

### Overview of Initiative

The Migrant Health Taskforce and OCDPH worked with Harbor Transit to develop a map and instructions on how to use the free Harbor Transit services to visit various places in Grand Haven, Grand Haven Township, Ferrysburg, Spring Lake, and Spring Lake Township. The map included eleven stops in the area.

### Rides are Free! / Los Paseos son gratis!



**Need a Ride?  
Give us a call!  
616.842.3200**

**¿Necesita transporte?  
¡Llamanos!  
616.842.3200**

1. Meijer
2. Walmart
3. St. John's Church
4. St. Pat's Church
5. Botello's
6. Goodwill Store
7. Grand Haven State Park
8. Love In Action
9. Salvation Army
10. Kirk Park
11. GH Coin laundry



Harbor Transit provides curb-to-curb transportation, delivering you directly to your destination. Our service area includes the City of Ferrysburg, City of Grand Haven, Grand Haven Township, Village of Spring Lake, and Spring Lake Township.

1. Call 616-842-3200
2. Ask for a Spanish speaking interpreter.
3. Let them know your address for pick up.
4. Tell them what time you would like to be picked up.
5. Tell them where you want to go.
6. Let them know what time you would like to be picked up and brought returned home.

#### Ride Times

**Monday – Friday**, 6am – 6pm (last call 5:30pm)  
**Saturday**, 9am – 4pm (last call 3:30pm)  
**Sunday**, 8am – 12:30pm (advanced registration required)

El autobús de Harbor Transit ofrece transporte de acera a acera y lo lleva directamente a su destino. Nuestra área de servicio incluye la ciudad de Ferrysburg, la ciudad de Grand Haven, el municipio de Grand Haven, el pueblo de Spring Lake y el municipio de Spring Lake.

1. Llama al 616-842-3200
2. Pide un intérprete de habla hispana.
3. Hágalos saber su dirección para recoger.
4. Dígalos a qué hora te gustaría que te recogieran.
5. Diles dónde quieres ir.
6. Hágalos saber a qué hora le gustaría que lo recogieran y lo regresaran a casa.

#### Tiempos de Viaje

**Lunes – viernes**, 6am – 6pm (última llamada 5:30pm)  
**Sábado**, 9am – 4pm (última llamada 3:30pm)  
**Domingo**, 8am – 12:30pm (se requiere registro avanzado)

## Harbor Transit Maps

### 2023 Evaluation

A survey was developed to collect feedback and information from migrant farmworkers who used the service. However, it should be noted that in 2023 only one participant completed the survey. As a result, feedback on this initiative should be interpreted with caution.

The participant who provided feedback in the survey said that they **had not used Harbor Transit before** receiving the map and instructions. They rated the map and instruction a **4 out of 5** in terms of usefulness. And they said they were **“very likely”** to use Harbor Transit again.

They also provided the following comments:

“[It would be helpful to be] more zoomed in on the actual map. And [have] a full map of how far Harbor Transit goes in Ferrysburg, GH, and Spring Lake.”

“Will it always be free? And what if you want to be picked up outside of the 11 places it lists on the paper?”

### Migrant Health Taskforce and OCDPH Feedback

Feedback from the Migrant Health Taskforce and OCDPH staff revealed that the map and instructions seemed helpful from their view. But gathering utilization data and more migrant farmworker feedback in the future will be important. The taskforce and staff also inquired about expanding the service into Holland by potentially partnering with Max Transit or other Holland-based services.

Together in Grand Haven, a transportation initiative that ran in 2022 was also mentioned, and staff and the taskforce felt it would be good to start that initiative again in the future if volunteers would be available.

### How does this initiative tie to the strategic plan?



Improve **transportation** options



Coordinate **events to engage** and **connect migrant farmworkers** with the community



Provide services that account for migrant farmworkers' **lack of time**, **work schedule**, and **conflicting hours with service providers**

### Suggestions for 2024

- Consider partnering with Max Transit or other Holland-based services to provide more options for farmworkers.
- Consider revising the map and instructions to offer more clarity on the fees and service areas of Harbor Transit.
- Consider developing additional tools to measure utilization or gain more feedback from migrant farmworkers.





## Veggie Van & Food Commodity Box Distribution

### Overview of Initiative

The Migrant Health Taskforce partnered with Ottawa Food and several community agencies and farms as part of this initiative to deliver fresh produce to migrant farmworkers at farm locations throughout the County. The produce bags distributed weighed an average of 30 pounds plus a melon that was given outside of the bag. In order to ensure that migrant farmworkers had culturally relevant food options, \$4,698.95 worth of culturally relevant produce was purchased from a grocery store. In addition to fresh produce, boxes of shelf-stable food were distributed in collaboration with Ottawa County Community Action Agency. And hygiene kits containing basic goods were distributed in partnership with St. Patrick—St. Anthony Parish.

In 2023, 935 bags of produce, 800 boxes of shelf-stable food, and 950 hygiene kits were distributed, culminating in 1,510 families/individuals served from June through September. This is a large increase from the 2,240 pounds of produce and 400 TEFAP boxes distributed in 2022.

935

bags of produce  
distributed

800

boxes of shelf-  
stable food

950

hygiene kits  
distributed

### How does this initiative tie to the strategic plan?



Work on solutions that address the **cost of healthcare services** and **fruit/vegetable access**



Provide services that account for migrant farmworkers' **lack of time**, **work schedule**, and **conflicting hours with service providers**



Other strategies around **food**



### Comments from participants:

"A very nice selection of produce."

"Thanks for the help, everything is very good. Thank you."

"Thanks for thinking about us."

"Good variety of foods both fresh and canned. Will help supplement our meals for the week. Thank you."

"Thank you very much for the help."

## Veggie Van & Food Commodity Box Distribution

### 2023 Evaluation

For 2023, a survey was developed for migrant farmworkers to share their feedback on the usefulness of both the veggie van and the food commodity box distribution. DHHS staff also provided feedback on the initiative.

**86%** of participants rated the commodity boxes a **5 out of 5**, meaning they were “**very useful**” to their families.

The remaining participants rated the commodity boxes a 2 out of 5, meaning between “somewhat useful” and “not at all useful.”

**42%** of participants said they did not eat some of the food provided.

Participants said they did not eat the creamy mushrooms. And participants asked for more milk, meat, and non-GMO items.

#### Comments from participants:

“The quantities were very small. A small oil lasts us two weeks. Although I am very grateful it was also not so helpful in helping out in the pantry.”

“We did not know how to use or cook some of the food.”

“It was not very relevant, and it was very small.”

**100%** of participants rated the veggie van a **5 out of 5**, meaning it was “**very useful**” to their families.

**75%** of participants said they did not eat some of the fruits and vegetables provided.

Participants said they did not eat the kale or garlic.

The main reason listed for not using some fruits and vegetables was not knowing how to use or cook some of them.

#### Comments from participants:

“We did not like some of them. We did not know how to use or cook some of them. There were too many fruits and veggies. The fruits and veggies went bad before we could use them.”

“We did not know how to use or cook some of them.”



## Veggie Van & Food Commodity Box Distribution

### Migrant Health Taskforce and OCDPH Feedback

Feedback from the Migrant Health Taskforce and OCDPH staff emphasized the importance of access to fresh, healthy, and local produce. In particular, the taskforce pointed out that the initiative provided support to local growers as well as migrant farmworkers. And staff reported that local farmers loved and supported the initiative. Through the effort, \$5,470 worth of produce was purchased from local farmers—a large benefit to the local farming community.

Other feedback considered partnering with organizations like Movement West Michigan in the future and continuing to partner with other organizations like Community Action Agency, YMCA, Community Action House, and local churches. Community Action House said they were committed to continuing fresh food distributions to migrant farmworkers.

Creating a volunteer coordinator position and working to build relationships and foster more participation with local growers was also discussed, as well as the lack of June distributions.



### Suggestions for 2024

- Continue to partner and build relationships with local growers and organizations to help foster program growth
- Consider adding more volunteer support for preparation and food distribution
- Continue emphasizing the inclusion of culturally relevant food
- Consider providing more resources on preparing and using food that is included in food distribution





## Micro Pantries

### Overview of Micro Pantries Initiative

The Migrant Health Taskforce and OCDPH contracted with Grand Haven's migrant school to construct three micro pantries that were placed at migrant farmworker camps in 2023. The micro pantries were stocked with personal care items, books, food, and reference materials.

#### How does this initiative tie to the strategic plan?



Work on solutions that address the **cost of healthcare services** and **fruit/vegetable access**



Provide services that account for migrant farmworkers' **lack of time**, **work schedule**, and **conflicting hours with service providers**



Improve countywide **coordination** and **collaboration** efforts among agencies



Improve **centralization** of **reference materials** for migrant farmworkers

### 2023 Evaluation

Data was not collected directly from the migrant farmworkers who received food and goods from the micro pantries.





## Micro Pantries



### Migrant Health Taskforce and OCDPH Feedback

The Migrant Health Taskforce and OCDPH staff said that the micro pantries are good for sustainable partnerships.

In future years, tracking the most and least used items from the micro pantries would be useful data. Like the veggie van and food commodity boxes, this would also help ensure that culturally relevant and useful food is being placed in the micro pantries.

### Suggestions for 2024

- Consider developing and implementing ways to get data and feedback from migrant farmworkers directly
- Consider developing a system to track what items are the most and least utilized from the micro pantries