



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**November 10, 2020**

**Board of Supervisors approves \$3.65 million for Farmworker Household Assistance Program**  
*Assistance will support farmworkers struggling from impacts of COVID-19*

Ventura, CA – The County of Ventura Board of Supervisors has unanimously approved \$3.65 million in federal Coronavirus Relief Funding to support the Farmworker Household Assistance Program (FHAP) to help farmworkers struggling to maintain their households due to pandemic-related hardships.

The Board of Supervisors approved the program’s framework and design in September, funded by a combination of donor and public dollars, to provide low-income farmworkers who live in Ventura County with financial relief from the impacts of COVID-19. The program, facilitated by the Human Services Agency and the Farmworker Resource Program, has had an overwhelming response. Almost immediately the need for the program among the farmworker community proved to be exceedingly high, resulting in more than 4,000 FHAP applications. With the additional funding, each qualified household will receive a one-time grant of \$1,000.

“Farmworkers are vital members of our community. Our food system is critical to our County and Nation’s collective health and these frontline workers have worked tirelessly throughout this health emergency,” said Mike Powers, County Executive Officer. “We appreciate the opportunity to provide assistance where it’s needed most, this program is important in supporting those who are struggling from the impacts of the pandemic and those who support us all through the agricultural products they provide throughout the year.”

The Ventura County Community Foundation (VCCF) anticipates raising \$400,000 in private funding from local growers and supporters to help meet the demand. “The FHAP has been a community collaboration from the beginning,” said Ellen Brokaw from Brokaw Ranch Company. “Two thousand farms in Ventura County depend on thousands of skilled workers to grow the fresh fruits and vegetables that sustain us all. At least 4,000 of these absolutely essential farmworkers are struggling to pay rent and put food on the table in the pandemic. The residents of Ventura County have stepped up in a big way to help them by donating to the Farmworker Household Assistance Program—none more than our County Supervisors who took action today to make certain that all qualified families receive assistance.”

The application period has ended. All applications are currently undergoing review to ensure that eligibility criteria are met. About 96% of FHAP applicants earned below 50% of the area median income for at least three or more months from January through June 2020. Although applications were received from all regions of the county, 88% of applicants reside in Oxnard, while 10% of applicants reside in Santa



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Paula, Port Hueneme, Fillmore and Ventura. Farmworkers who speak Spanish and/or Mixteco as their primary language were heavily represented among applicants.

FHAP outreach included extensive community outreach conducted by the Farmworker Resource Program. Outreach included information in English, Spanish, Mixtec, Zapotec and Purépecha about stopping the spread of COVID-19 and providing referrals to other basic-needs services. “The pandemic’s impact on farmworkers underscores this population’s disproportionate struggles and lack of resources,” said Melissa Livingston, Director of the Ventura County Human Services Agency, which is administering the program. “FHAP was designed to offer these essential workers and their families some relief and to show them our support through this challenging time.”

Supporting the agricultural community was a priority before the pandemic and this commitment allowed for swift action with partners early on and throughout the ongoing pandemic response. The agricultural industry, growers, farmworker advocates, the Farmworker Resource Program, Agricultural Commissioner’s Office, Office of the CEO, Human Services Agency, Logrando Bienestar (the County’s program to connect those in need with mental health services), Public Health and community partners have worked together with weekly coordination calls and resource support. The FHAP was developed through this partnership with a goal of helping those in need.

To donate to the FHAP, please visit [vccf.org/fhap](http://vccf.org/fhap). Every dollar donated will go directly to farmworker families in need.

For more information on the Farmworker Household Assistance Program, visit [www.vchsa.org/FHAP](http://www.vchsa.org/FHAP).

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